

TIPPERARY ARTS CENTRE, 8.10.2021 h15CEST + ONLINE in collaboration with The Foyer

ROUND TABLE artists + producers

18M8L action #1: Tipperary, Ireland

PARTICIPANTS

moderator

Silvia Albanese ([TIR Danza](#))

with

Francesca Foscarini ([website](#))

Nicola Galli ([website](#))

Carlotta Garlanda ([mk](#); 18M8L project coordinator)

Federica Giuliano ([VAN](#))

John Ashford (The Foyer – [Aerowaves](#))

Bernard Baumgarten ([Trois C-L](#))

Jazmin Chiodi ([Dublin Dance Festival](#))

Louise Costelloe ([Dance Ireland](#))

Alexandre Iseli ([Tipperary Dance International Festival](#))

Ingrid Kalka ([Tanztendenz München e.V.](#))

Laurie Uprichard ([Firkin Crane](#))

Francesca Foscarini

explaining the ecosystem of contemporary dance drawing

I created it in 2014 with other dancers – and Federica Giuliano, who is here now, is also in it.

I put myself in this area as a choreographer, as dancer and as teacher of contemporary dance. So, those three different ways of practising the language of contemporary dance are connected to each other.

I brought outside different results, that's why I put different shapes, since my artwork can be very different each time, depending on which project I'm working on. On the ceiling I put Founding – which is what allows me to create – Audience, Community – because it's also part of this system – and Festivals – as the relation with presenters; these three clouds are also part of the same sky: I put on the sky because... this is actually to look up to something, as well as looking for something.

So, this is my drawing: I can imagine this tree in the middle of a huge forest, between different kinds of trees, with different needs, different shapes... some trees need more water, some less, they might change with the season or not. This is my personal point of view, how I see my professional position within this system.

Silvia Albanese

Thank you Francesca for accepting this invitation and for showing this vision of your personal perception of the ecosystem, the perception of yourself within this ecosystem. This image of the forest is beautiful – with the different trees having different shapes and different needs. I would now love to hear about it from Nicola's.

Nicola Galli

This is my ecosystem drawing: I imagine that with a central question mark – the green one: it's a «what» – which could be considered an artistic work (a show, a performance, a picture). In between, there is the artist and I had draw some double arrows which connect all of the actors and skills that are all involved, to focus on the audience. So i put the artist in relation with the producer and both with artistic directors (theatre, venues, presenters, or site-specific places in which this «what» is happening). All those arrows are for the audience: as an artist, I'm really interested in getting in dialogue with the audience, not as a subject, but using the art to connect with it. We – the artists, producers, presented, but also the audience itself – are represented by these arrows, which means we share the common responsibility to protect that space which exists for the art to thrive, and also for the risks born during the artistic process, and to take care of those risks for final results. This «what», this topic, involves a dimension of fragility. So I think we have to take care of it, and also to help the audience to welcome all of these unknown topics about human beings, our planet, the world we are living in.

Federica Giuliano

I'm sorry but I don't have a drawing to show you, because – when I started to think about it – I realized that I had a story to tell, which I'm not really able to show just by drawing. My story – I mean the story of an artistic project - starts with the first thought in the artist's head... I can picture this thought as a soft ball, a soap ball, really fragile, which needs to be taken care of; then, the artist

gets in touch with the artistic director and promoter and talks about this project, and, at this point, I imagine the soft ball becoming like a crystal ball, less fragile, and with a shape, more like a shell, something a little harder. The third step in the creation of the artistic project is to find the money: because you can have fantastic ideas, but without money you can't do anything. So you can find producers and co-producers that can help you incorporate this crystal ball into a bigger ball, where the crystal ball can move freely and somehow rise, like bread, like something that needs to grow. Inside this ball there are all other people too, every person who is working with the artist for the project, and that's administrators, organizers, technicians, musicians, all the other dancers involved... After the production period, you get something very solid, very big, that I can imagine like a satellite, a moon. The moon has a beautiful meaning for us, in the sky, but we need somebody to allow the moon to shine, and I think this spotlight as the audience. I believe that different audiences can make the mood shine in many possible ways. It all depends on the culture, the tradition, the language, the city where the audience lives; it can always give this artistic project a different shade. But the audience is not alone, there is always a link between the first artistic director and the artist, to think about the project together. I think that the artistic director has the task to take the audience and say: «You don't have to look everywhere in the sky, you only have to see that moon, and I can help you imagine how to put in the right way to understand it and let it shine».

Silvia Albanese

So, we made an introduction to today's topic and explored some perception of the artists that are present: Francesca and Nicola, and the producer involved, Federica, to understand their perception of the dance ecosystem and of their own place inside it. I'm very interested to hear your opinions and reactions.

Carlotta Garlanda

Just the chance to say hello everyone and thank you a lot for being here and inviting us and open this space on Zoom.

I'm here as part of the project 18M8L, representing mk dance company, the project leader, together with TIR Danza, VAN, Spellbound and Chiasma. I'd just like to ask something: talking about this perception of ecosystem, do you have any perception of a change? Do you feel that this last couple

of years have somehow changed (or not) your perception of the ecosystem? Do you feel exactly the same as before or do you feel there has been any change? Which are your feelings concerning the moment where we are in – now that everything is opening up again and we are all working a lot?

Louise Costelloe

Speaking as the programme producer of Dance Ireland, the last 18 months have kept the ecosystem very invisible, while also making some of the problems in the ecosystem very invisible... But I would say that in this system, things are not always visible even between the people who are working together, in how people are operating. Also, the things that are missing are very clear as well, and how precarious everything was is really informing a lot how we are thinking now, as well.

Bernard Baumgarten

I think that, when the crisis started, it escalated very quickly and we had to react, so everybody found out how to go on in this crisis. We started very well, we did a lot of things, and we were very aware about the situation of the artists – I think the problem was always there and it just became very obvious with the crisis, and all the problems for the artists emerged: like talking about money of course, about how to produce, how to find the money, how to co-produce, how to travel less, and all the stuff we know about the eco-responsibility of production. After these 18 months, we were full of good will and intentions, and we said to ourselves: «we're going to do it differently and better». But now, I have the feeling that since September we started to go back to the old thing. I'm really disappointed about everybody saying they were going to produce less, better, with more finances for the artists, and so on, seeing how it's going. Looking at all the programmes, we had so many performances and evenings programmed for the next season. It's amazing! I have the feeling everybody is afraid to lose the spots, to miss the train, and everybody is really trying to push it. I'm really sorry to say that, but I have the feeling we didn't learn anything from this crisis.

Carlotta Garlanda

This was one of the reasons I made my question: I was expecting this kind of reaction, and I fully understand it. This is the tricky point, I would say, so thanks a lot, because every perspective is relevant.

Silvia Albanese

Would anyone like to say something regarding that? Or just to describe how you perceive yourself in the ecosystem, since you are in different positions. We just heard the artist's and producer's perspective, but it would be nice if somebody joined the conversation about it, even with other comments.

Ingrid Kalka

I come from Munich, where I'm running a theatre for independent dancing. I think there was a lot of support from the community there, it was very local, a lot of things were happening in the roads, out of the spaces and venues. The artists first found it difficult to adapt, trying to bring their work to the outside. Theatres went quite fast with applications, and making streaming material available, as well as experimenting with other techniques, then, at some point, we were able to go outside, and then festivals came, theatre openings, all the applications, all the works were seen, and it was like it could have been a little bit more organic... At the moment there is a lot to see in the local scene, which was not the same before in Munich, so I would say that was a big change for the city.

Bernard Baumgarten

I think I share the same perspective about this change in the local scene: people were very pointed that the local scene had to be taken care of, that we had to do a lot to help local artists go on. I hope this tendency is going to continue, and now that everything gets better, I hope that we don't go back to the crazy rhythm of before, too focused on international artists. I think local producing and presenting is one of the very important things, that we have to try, at least, to save, after the pandemic.

Jazmin Chiodi

I remember John saying in one of the meetings we had, in the very beginning of the foyer, something like «we need to make the local sexy». Because you know, we always think that what comes from abroad is more interesting, or smarter... I think there are a couple of things that changed the situation here in Ireland. I agree with what the others were saying there, because the ecosystem is quite fragile here, also because no one understands very well its *ruling/role-ing* situation. We are all trying to do everything at once, instead of defining roles and competences,

something like: «ok, I am now the director of Dublin Dance festival so this is what Dublin Dance festival can be; Alex is the director of Tipperary dance Festival, and this is what Tipperary dance festival can be; this is what Dance Ireland can do», and so on. Instead, people are so afraid to lose funding that they just to start to tick all the boxes, like «do you want what? Diversity? I do diversity; I do international, I do residency, I do, I do, I do», and in the end what happens to the scene itself? And the artists get very lost and alone, because there is not that deal, that understanding of what it is that they can do, or who they can talk to, to move forward. I think as well there is in here a big arrow pointing towards a «the funding is for the artist» perspective, which has quite a strong power. It leaves the artists quite lonely in all the development of how their work can be presented, can be managed, can be produced, can be moved and become visible. So they have to take this entrepreneur role, which for some of them is very challenging, very difficult, and they don't know how to do that. Then they spend all the time doing that, rather than being in the studio... so I think that this is because somehow there is a fear to say «no» to certain things, and then be fine with that. To say «ok, that is not what we are for», this is not what Dublin Dance festival can do, or this is not what Dance Ireland can do, and then that there is someone else that can respond for that part of the ecosystem. So that we don't eat each other, otherwise there is no ecosystem. So it's like we grab as much as we can of resources in our corner, and I don't think this is worth it, or working, either. I think there is a necessity to not occupy all the spaces, to leave some for others. You know when you are in class, learning how to dance: the first thing they teach you as a small kid is to how to occupy the space. Now we have to learn how to empty the space, go there where there is room, there is oxygen, and there is air.

Alexandre Iseli

I think this is true, but the opposite it is also true. You speak about this fear fact that we are all running to fill the void, because we have the fear to lose everything, but I think that we also have to fill a void, since there are so many empty spots. And if we have to talk about an ecosystem, it's not possible to create an ecosystem with one flower, one mushroom, one tree. You need numbers to make an ecosystem, to get the stability and resilience it needs to survive. I think the situation here is maybe very local and maybe it is different from other places, because its so scarce. But we do have to fill a lot of the tasks required from this sistem, and maybe we would be better specialising a bit more and not doing everything. But here in Ireland, if we hadn't done everything we have,

either no audience or or no artist would have showed up in the country. It's not just out of the fear of losing funding, but it's about having to create the ecosystem from zero. That's too much to carry and also, for artist, there is this sort of illusion of independence, but I think that the fact that an artist is supposed to be able to write policy is wrong. Why should an artist be writing policy? It takes so much time and it specific skills. And that is just an example.

Louise Costelloe

It's not very kind to say to an artist «you make the policy», I think a dialogue is needed, and the exchange is about support, and inviting people to have this conversation. So it's not just working in bubbles, where nothing is crossing between one and the other, it's about understanding, maybe what everyone of us can bring to the table, to start the ecosystem.

Silvia Albanese

From here, I think we could move to the second point of what we thought to share with you today. The second point is linked to your most recent comments, especially by Jazmin and Alex. It's about the cooperation with an artist from the producer's point of view: I'm asking myself if I am the one that has to make everything, and why I find myself in a position in which I might be working too much. Is it because there is a lack of cooperation with someone else? I'm leaving an open question. I'm asking to the artists, too, to reflect on this cooperation aspect, and to focus on the kind of support they feel feel like they need: when, by whom, in which situations, and where do they find there is a lack of support and cooperation.

Nicola Galli

With Silvia, we had a long of conversation after lunch about supporting and co-operation. As an artist I feel supported when I can get in touch and create a dialogue with an artistic director, so with a presenter, a dialogue on common topics, and I'm happy if we can structure a path together, in order to develop several actions with time, not only focusing on the single production, or the artistic residency, but to also involve the audience into the creative process, and then present some slots of the artistic process, and lastly the final result. So for me this topic is very important, to create a wave with the work made together, that produces an echo in an environment, in the community. I choose a narrow seed and we have to take care of it together, to grow a kind of

artistic plant. I also want to share that I feel supported by my production structure, TIR Danza, and I'm very glad to be part of this organisation. TIR is the main producer of my works, not only for the production and the administration, but also, when I start an artistic process, we have meetings in order to find topics to talk and to explore the idea together. It is really important to me to understand where we can go together when I have the idea for a project. So, as an artist, I would say it is important not to feel alone in this researching practice, in this discovering. So in this moment I also need to project more and more with a producer that can help me to get in contact with many presenters, and also to create a storytelling, a common topic, and find someone who is really interested to create this wave together, and take the risk together with me.

Silvia Albanese

In terms of co-operation with the artistic direction of TIR Danza, I found in your words that you feel really supported, so I understand that the co-operation for you is an important value, both in the quality of the dialogue and in building a project together from an idea. What about you, Francesca?

Francesca Foscari

During the lockdowns, I had the time to dedicate myself to the artistic process without thinking which presenters to I contact, or how to write down application. I just had the chance to go in the studio and try things out. Since I had the space and the possibility to go, it was a very nice feeling, like to be back to the base of being an artist. That is, for me, being in a studio and work. These are the things that I love to do, and the things I can do better. So the gap for me presents when it's time to make the second step, which is to be in contact to who can help you, as Federica said before, to transform the soft ball into a crystal ball, then into a big ball and lastly into a moon. I can say that the bridge that helps me in this process is Federica, as she is taking care of the administration, but the lack for me personally in this moment of my career is a bridge to connect my work with festival, presenters, to build a dialogue that allows you to make the project visible. But what I'm saying is that it's also important to keep in mind the urgency to create something. The cooperation of course is very important, but as we earlier mentioned there is this «I do, I do, I do», as well as this empty space... I think it give us something that now is a disappearing, because we are back to this kind of productive approach, also to the art. This is, in my opinion, the contradiction.

Silvia Albanese

The focus was on how, when and if we feel supported, and in a cooperation. Also because of the project we are here for, both physically and digitally, named 18M8L, which is made by an alliance of companies. Through this experience, we are exploring through different ways of cooperate. This is why I was wondering if we can think about cooperation together. For me for instance also this writing the project together with Carlotta and the other colleagues, with the other companies involved, was an attempt to focus on our needs as companies, not just from the perspective of our small ecosystem and personal point of view, but related to one another. And also in this sharing time together, here in Tipperary, is the first action of the project, and it's a moment, a time we have, in which we can really work together with the producers, not just with the artists, to create a space and time to dialogue, to reflect, to share. This is something that helps me to create the basis really for a true cooperation model between us – the artist and producers – and between us – the different companies – acting in the same environment, which is the Italian ecosystem of supported companies. And also sharing competences and contacts, since the old model proposes the contrary, which is a system where there is no sharing contacts, relationships and information. I say: no! Let's build a round table and let's share our relationships, with their values, the people, the contacts, and let's create a project together. For me, this is concrete cooperation and this is something that I think we are really trying to do with this project. I would also love to hear Federica's opinion; she is a producer of VAN, and I'm very glad she's here with us.

Federica Giuliano

VAN is a collective of 8 choreographers, founded in 2013 by Francesca Foscarini, Giorgia Nardin, and Marco D'Agostin, and we don't really have an artistic direction, every choreographer decide for themselves what they want to work on. So VAN has 7 completely different projects, independent between them. It's like having 7 companies under the same virtual structure (everybody lives in different places around Italy and abroad), so we don't have a physical space. In fact, Covid hasn't really changed the way we stay together and work together, because it was already like this!

Actually, I feel supported inside my workspace... I think my job is full of responsibility, since I and my colleague, Eleonora Cavallo – who takes care of organization and logistic – are the only two people who really know every single project. The choreographers don't always talk to each other about it, while we are working everyday with all of them, to make the money sufficient for

everything to be possible. I feel supported when I can communicate easily with everyone, and everyone understands the importance of my helping presence. Sometimes, artists are closed in their own project, not understanding that all people who support them are necessary. Then there is also another aspect, that I really try to keep in touch with other people who do the same job, but in a different context, with other collectives, or dance company, to share our views. To find other colleagues it's kind of tricky, since it's not so common, and we are not so many. Sometimes we have big problems to solve, in the administration world, and I feel glad when I know there are other people who I can be in a relationship with.

Silvia Albanese

At the end it looks like dialogue is what really makes us to feel supported, from the different points of view. But there was another word that you told me today, that I want to bring here, in the third part of this dialogue, that is *kindness*: as you were saying that you feel supported when the communication is based on kindness, and I wanted to think together about how this element helps the development of our job. When previously today we talked about the needed competences in our sector, I asked our group, so Francesca and Nicola already answered in their previous interventions, about the competences they need around them to develop their artistic projects, and when Federica answered, kindness came out...

Federica Giuliano

I have to say that VAN is a context that really provides this kindness to me, since Marco, Francesca and Giorgia have always been very patient, kind and soft. In these last years, there have been difficult moments between us, too, but every time no one used hard words, or an angry attitude, there was always this kindness in speaking one another. And I always appreciated it, also because the previous experiences I had were different.

Ingrid Kalka

You're talking a lot about dialogue: is it intended more practically or like in being a dramaturg figure? I'm the managing director of something like 25 choreographers, have been running a space in 35 years now and I have to say, it's more strict: I'm just giving them the space and the structure, so I'm not so much in a dialogue with them about their work, the artistic ideas. My role is just to try

and give them the best space, and options to work, asking them what they need, and that's all. It seems to me, from how you talk about your experiences, that you have more dialogue, and maybe that's because we host many more choreographers... I just feel I'm there for structure: time, space, and that's it.

Alexandre Iseli

I believe that the discussion was about the relationship itself... and I'd like to go back to the example of ecology, since we use this word a lot, and I'm a biologist before being a dancer. What defines an ecosystem is not just the components, an ecosystem is not an infrastructure, it's a networks of relationships. What defines the ecosystem, the functioning within, is the nature between relationships, that's what creates the dynamics. It's not just in the presence, it's a balance. The nature of the relationship itself, is what makes the system. Basically what you said, Ingrid, is emerging, and I don't think there's necessarily a contradiction in what you said. When I hear what you said I think, that, well, of course, somebody needs to do it, to make that infrastructure available and make it work. But the relationships you have in it is also important, even if it's just a chat you have with the artist, not necessarily how do you intervene, or you connect with their artistic work. I think we have been suffering a lot is this harshness in some relationships... Here in Ireland, the relationship for example with the technical crew are extremely harsh, almost brutal; finding the people, and then the way you have to manage the work to be done until the stage is set. So it's hard to define the relationship, I feel maybe it makes the system a bit of healthier, and of course there's going to be a long shift in what we do. It's just by starting to have true relationships with the people we choose to collaborate with.

Silvia Albanese

I completely agree. In the end, at the core of everything, there are the relationships, with their quality and clarity. Authenticity is also related with *clarity*, which is the keyword today's Foyer. The Italian economic system is very unbalanced, that's why it's important to focus on this: where it is unbalanced, and not to complain, but to express a desire, to ask for more opportunities, more cooperation, and a more equal distribution of resources. This also regards the quality of the choices and the communication of the choices that have been made, and that artistic directors take responsibility for. So please, be *clear* on what you choose and express which are the values that lay

behind your choices, from an artistic point of view. And also, it regards how we are using public funding. So what do you think about it, John?

John Ashford

The place I get back to is directly in response of what you just said, it's when I was responsible for a year-round program of dance at the Place Theatre. And I hope that during that time I was as kind and direct as possible with the artists who I welcomed on the stage, and also those who I couldn't find a place for. In doing so, you simply invoke a series of 8 different criteria, and for example say to the artist «you do not meet criteria 4 and 5, therefore, I'm not going to insert you». In the end, the role of a director, the artistic director in this case, is to make personal judgements, and the quality of those personal judgements is determined by the audience, by your funders, and by your peers. Because the ecosystem of feedback to which you not respond. When I did that job at the Place Theatre, for every single event, if not every performance, I was there, to see it live and see how the audience reacted. So what I make is not only a personal judgement, it wasn't simply a «I like it», but rather, a «even though I like it, I'm afraid my audience is not going to respond to this». So the quality of the personal judgement is not simply an artistic one, but it takes so many other aspects of observation of the environment in which the work is placed. Some people may know of an organisation in the UK called [Artsadmin](#), working in the live arts, performing arts and theatre. Many years ago, the founder director was already retired, I was first meant to work for them, as I would represent a joint management and producing service for emergent independent artists. And at one point, I went to Judith Knight, and I said: «Judith, there's a friend of mine who just stopped being a dancer, with a contemporary dance company called Lloyd Newson, and would like to join your network, and I really think we should take that demand», and Judith said: «No, it's dance, while we do theatre». In the end I prevailed, and Dv8 was a company who became a company associated with Artsadmin, throughout its life. So it is possible, I would say, to those people who are now developing their structure, to remain with those artists. It is possible to retain artists, throughout their career, in a way that makes the producing relationship grow with the nature and history of the work. The last thing I want to say is to bring good news to Bernard, because I think we have learnt from Covid. What's happening right now is an explosion of works that are now possible to present live on the stage to the audience. So, for the last two years, it hasn't really been possible. There is now two years worth of works now coming out on the stage. However for some

people in the room, including me, if we were making a Perform Europe application in the last two weeks, we would have directly addressed those issues. I've also been engaged to make a three year application to Creative Europe. So, there is a great emphasis on providing residencies in groups of subsequent journeys by land, rather than flying back and forward on airplanes, and those residencies might be more properly offered in hometown, rather than dodging all over Europe. So I think what it will happen in the next three years. And the recognition within the ground systems, that is something which should be properly developed.

Lastly, Francesca, I loved your image of the tree, because you answered the question of the ecosystem with a symbol of THE ecosystem: a tree in a forest. And I think the way you placed all your elements, is really interesting within that. So it was not the lateral nor hierarchical structure, but genuinely in the ecosystem, where funding falls from the sky, or from the clouds, and the community feeds your roots. So I land with a question, which is: when you put the community in your roots, were you talking about the community in the place where you live? And where does your performance work first, or are you talking about the European or worldwide community of dance nourishing what you do? You had community in your roots, I'd like to learn more about what you believe that community is: where is it? what is its nature? how does it nourish you? and how do you give back to it?

Francesca Foscari

Actually, I also put community also. But seeing the community in the roots, maybe comes from a need that I have now, because I'm looking for a place where to put my roots... I'm now living between the North and the South of Italy, and in the North, in these last years, I feel that I have somehow built a community, of students, of people who follow my classes, and then they also come to see my shows. So they became a part of the audience. And community for me is also people who I met during the residencies: with them I'm able to create an exchange. Relationship for me is also exchange: receiving and giving; so many times during the residencies I had the chance to meet people from the community. I bring dance to them in a different ways, for example I like to work with non-professional dancers, to shorten the distance between our world and the world outside, to bring more difference in a different way to our community. I have the desire to bring more dance to the people, especially now that there is a need to go back to our body, to put the body in relation with other people.

John Ashford

I'm interested in what Silvia said in the beginning, about locality, but I think that the theme here is really about present kindness, and I'm afraid I may have enlarged the discussion, by trying to bring forward the things I had in my mind in the last year and half. Within the Aereowaves context, I always talk about a sort of generosity which I think it's probably in the same area, and I think it's something which must be inherited in any artistic ecosystem. And where it isn't, we have to work on it.

Silvia Albanese

We spoke about kindness today because we really we have to focus on the the well-being within our job, work, and daily life. Especially in our job where we don't have strict borders between work and private life... someone has no borders at all, someone is trying to build some borders and it's not so easy, but in the end we are immersed in what we are making with our artistic job, and that's the reason we decided to be here. But we also have to take care of our own well-being, in our bodies and our souls... So kindness is one of the necessary competences, a soft skill we could say, we focused on this morning, that is necessary in our organisations, in our work environments, in order really to feel well while working together because the objectives are really high, and we put ourselves in continuous challenges since we don't have so many resources. And we have support our artist also in different situations and moments, taking risks together. So I hope we could all be kind, with ourselves first of all, and with the others as well. And if we don't have time, and are stressed and everything, we need to remember this, keep in mind that it's the small details – like kindness – that can really change the attitude.

Alexandre Iseli

We've been talking about relationships and I just started to think of the nature of dance, and about the cooperation of dancers and dance artists, as they tend to be younger, while the people who build infrastructure tend to be a bit older. I was wondering if there is not a bit of a bias, hierarchy, perceived or real, that makes all relationships a bit more difficult between the artists themselves. I think, from what we are observing here, that dance artists, being so young, are sometimes too shy to even talk to us and say «we need this, or that, or what we imagine, or we do», and we think we are alike but we are twenty years older than they are, so there's maybe a bit of a hierarchy.

Louise Costelloe

It's an interesting observation and It's been on my mind a lot, because the culture that dancers grow up in, and are trained in, and I think there are some things at this point – when we talk about kindness – that are present in some places where we are working, we could leave behind for the others, particularly in terms of that lateral structure that we've talking about. There's a history of hierarchy: of the artistic director, of the choreographer, and these are social structures that inform all the relationships and dialogues, so maybe we have to step back and take a look, and maybe leave some of the assumptions behind, creating space for dialogue that consists in meeting people at the same level. But we have to acknowledge that there's been working practices and assumptions about how people work that inform that relationship and make younger dancers feel less confident.

Silvia Albanese

The focusing on being on the same level for me comes through the human approach: we are all human beings, relating kindly to each other, and the information concerning the roles, that are still informing, of course, and paying respect to those roles also comes forward because of a role we occupy in the system, or in the ecosystem. It's important that everybody covers their own role, because they are functional to make projects possible. Without the artists, without the producers, without the programmers, without the policy, things couldn't happen. But we should leave behind for a moment the hierarchical modality, the model model based on Ego, for an ecologic model: we are sitting here, in a circle, and really consider that everyone is important, something similar to what happens in nature I guess, where all the elements that are in the ecosystem are important to nourish it and protect it. The tree can't exist without all the environment around it.

Bernard Baumgarten

I can give an example of a network, that is called [Grand Luxe](#). It's a very ironic name, the idea is to put on the same level the 8 producers and 8 artists. It means that 8 artists are chosen every year, and we are working with them for a year – sometimes more – meeting a couple of times to reverse the roles: we are the ones who apply for the artists, then we hire the artists who want to work with us. It's a game made to learn how it is to be on the other side. We have different ateliers, and in between these games there are residencies. There are no roles/rules in this network, that means the

prescription when we choose an artist is «what Can i Get?» and we don't know what we will get in the end. We also never talk about money, since we believe that it should not be the centre of this network (of course it happens that someone gets co-produced after that year, but that's in another frame). What we can ask in that year could be anything you can imagine, and the idea is just to help the artists make an extra step in their career. So we had a meeting during this last week, with the 8 new artists we choose, and in that moment they said what they wanted, what they want to achieve, and it was very interesting: one of the choreographers was already making his own costumes, but he didn't really have the skills to do it. He could draw it, he can somehow fix it with scotch, but he never had the technique to produce it. So this year he is going to go to different theatres and cultural centres, where they have this knowledge, and he's gonna learn how to produce his own costume. I remember that two years ago another choreographer wanted to shoot fireworks on stage, but she had no idea on how to do that. But one of our partners had that kind of Knowledge, and there where two people there in charge of it, who could make all this technical stuff happen on stage safely. So they had a workshop of two weeks on how to work with this stage element, to deal with this idea. But it can be also the opposite: sometimes it's just hanging around the house together to learn different things on how to build your project. So, the main idea behind is to put us all on the same high level, just to decide together where we're going in the future. We want to change the relationship in between the artists and the producers.