

Dampfzentrale Turbinensaal

MI 6.5. | 21:00

DO 7.5. | 20:00

Stammtisch | MI 6.5. | 23:00

Ontroerend Goed (Gent) & The Border Project (Adelaide) Fight Night

Mit: Angelo Tijssens, Charlotte De Bruyne, Gilles De Schryver, Michai Geyzen, Roman Vaculik,

Suzanne Grotenhuis Regie: Alexander Devriendt

Text: Alexander Devriendt, Angelo Tijssens & das Ensemble

Bühne & Kostüm: Sophie De Somere

Bühne & Licht: Lilith Tremmery

Komposition: Cameron Goodall, David Heinrich

Sound Design: David Heinrich Grafik

Projektion: Nick Mattan

Produktionsleitung: David Bauwens

Koproduktion: Theatre Royal Plymouth, Vooruit Gent, Richard Jordan Productions

Mit der Unterstützung von: Adelaide Festival

Sprache: Englisch

Dauer: 1h 30 min

Eintritt: 35.–/25.–

Wahlen geben uns ein Gefühl von Mitbestimmung. Jede Stimme zählt. Ob in der Politik oder in der Unterhaltungsbranche, jeder darf mitentscheiden – wenigstens jeder, der von den Teilnahmebestimmungen nicht ausgeschlossen wird.

Auch in Fight Night ist ihre Stimme gefragt. Fünf Kandidat_innen, fünf Runden, nur einer bleibt übrig! Sie wählen aber nicht nach politischen Ideologien. Und die Kandidat_innen haben auch kein aussergewöhnliches Talent. Die Anwärter kriegen Sie nur mit ihrer Rhetorik, ihrem Charme und ihrer Strategie rum.

«It has often been said that you can't have a show without an audience and tonight that is more true than ever. Because tonight we will not only need your eyes and ears but at the centre of everything will be your voice.»

Gewinnt dabei der Liebling der Mehrheit? Oder kriegen wir schliesslich den Kompromiss, mit dem niemand so richtig zufrieden ist? Zu wem wechseln Sie, wenn Ihr Kandidat rausfliegt? Und wieso ist der Underdog immer so verdammt attraktiv?

Üben Sie hier schon mal, im Herbst sind nämlich wieder echte Wahlen!

Seit Ontroerend Goed 2011 mit «A Game of You» zum ersten Mal bei AUA war, hat die Gruppe hier eine kleine Fangemeinde. Dieses Jahr beehren uns diese Belgier_innen bereits zum vierten Mal und bringen gleich zwei Produktionen mit (> S. 30 Sire-ns). Und beide beweisen wieder die grosse Vielfalt ihrer Stücke, denn Ontroerend Goed sucht für jede Produktion eine neue Form, die zum Inhalt passt. Fight Night haben sie zusammen mit The Border Project entwickelt, einer Gruppe aus Adelaide, welche mit Ästhetiken der Popkultur und zeitgenössischen Themen dasjenige Publikum ansprechen will, das vom traditionellen australischen Theater ausgeschlossen wird.

ANKÜNDIGUNG DER GRUPPE

FIGHT NIGHT combines Ontroerend Goed and The Border Project's forces into a playful and immersive political exploration. The performance puts five actors into the position of 'candidates' struggling to get the audience's sympathy and, ultimately, their vote. Only one of them will survive the relentless series of eliminations and they apply all possible tactics and strategies to assure their victory.

Set on a platform reminiscent of a boxing ring, the competition is fought not with fists but with words and looks. The audience, armed with a voting keypad, decides who stays and who goes, but gets entangled in an increasingly complex and puzzling system of rules and manipulations. As in mediated political campaigns, polls and predictions, debates and charm offensives challenge the voters' loyalty and common sense, in the end toppling their notion of free choice.

Fight Night is thoroughly political, but never explicitly so. The candidates don't voice a particular ideology, nor do they comment on social issues or economic realities. By stripping their discourse of identifiable political messages, the show draws attention to the very reasons and motivations that compel voters to vote. What is at stake, is the way the concept of 'rule of the people' is put into practice in contemporary democratic societies. Fight Night illustrates how content and ideas are only relevant if they make a difference in statistics and increase the chance to gain power through numbers.

As in Ontroerend Goed's Audience (2011), the spectators are again at the heart of the performance's dramaturgy. While in the former production, the audience was warmed up to become a crowd and then confronted with the beauty and danger of group behaviour, Fight Night casts them as voters granted unprecedented power over the progression of the show. Clearing their way through randomness and irrationality, consideration and conscience, the performance guides them on their path to become a majority.

ÜBER ONTROEREND GOED

Ontroerend Goed (a punning name, roughly translated as "Feel Estate") is a theatre performance group based in Ghent, Belgium. At the core of all our work is the belief that the world is inevitably doomed but also the belief that every action matters, every interaction is worthwhile. The performances we create deal with how people, as individuals, cope with the world around them, the problems it poses, the high probability of its bad outcome and how everything people do, all their interactions as human beings, are extremely valuable and important. We embrace the tension between these two beliefs in every idea we try to communicate. We look for the ideal form to convey each idea. Ontroerend Goed is Alexander Devriendt, Joeri Smet, Charlotte De Bruyne, Karolien De Bleser, Angelo Tijssens, David Bauwens, Wim Smet, Sophie De Somere, Jeffrey Caen and Karen Van Ginderachter.

<http://www.ontroerendgoed.be/>

ÜBER THE BORDER PROJECT

The Border Project is a contemporary performance ensemble committed to exploring the future language of live performance. We create performance that engages and communicates with an audience that traditional theatre has left behind, using a language that reflects the time and place that we live in. We build our shows around things that fascinate us, terrify us, confound us or crack us up. Like our audience, we participate in the sophisticated aesthetics of popular culture. We explore theatre as an intersection point for other popular forms, engaging with this to make theatre that genuinely speaks about the complexities of the world we live in.

<http://www.theborderproject.com>

BIOGRAFIEN

Alexander Devriendt

Director Alexander Devriendt (Belgium, °19XX) is the artistic director & one of the founders of Ontroerend Goed. His past work includes the creation of the individual theatre trilogy ('The Smile Off Your Face', 'Internal' & 'A Game of You'), the direction of the three celebrated teenage plays 'Once, and for all we're gonna tell you who we are so shut up and listen', 'Teenage Riot' & 'All that is wrong', and 'A History of Everything' co-produced with Sydney Theatre Company. His most recent work is 'Sirens', a performance on feminism. Currently he's working in Belgium on ARE WE NOT DRAWN ONWARD TO NEW ERA.

His plays have won several awards around the world, and is performed all over Europe, Australia and America, recently visiting the Middle East, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Angelo Tijssens

Actor Angelo Tijssens (Belgium, 1986) studied theatre at the Antwerp Conservatorium. He made a few shows, as a director, actor and writer, but after a couple of years, he started working for OG as an understudy, but soon enough he actually joined the company and started touring all over the world. His work with Ontroerend Goed includes 'A Game of You', 'Internal', 'Audience', 'A History Of Everything' and 'Fight Night' and 'OMG', with co-actress Charlotte De Bruyne. He acted in some films and several television series, wrote three short films (two were nominated for a 'Palme d'Or' at the Cannes Film Festival) and is currently writing a feature film called 'Letter to Yourself', together with artistic director Alexander Devriendt.

Charlotte De Bruyne

Actor Charlotte De Bruyne (°1990) started acting in 2002 at the Ghent based youth theatre "Kopergietery". This is where she first met Ontroerend Goed, as one of the teenagers in "Once and for all we gonna tell you who we are so shut up and listen". After a two year tour she played in several other OG-shows including "The smile off your face", "Internal", "A game of you", "A history of everything" and "Fight Night". She went to the royal academy of fine arts in Ghent to study acting. In 2012 she played her first movie role in "Little Black Spiders" directed by Patrice Toye. For her role in "Flying Home" she won an Ensor, a Flemish Film Award for Best Actress.

Gilles De Schryver

Actor Gilles De Schryver (°84) is a film-, TV- and theater -actor, -writer – director and –producer. He is artistic director of the Ghent-based theater collective 'het KIP' (literally translated 'the CHICKEN' as an abbreviation in Dutch for 'Royal Institute for Performing Arts'). He produces film and television through his production company 'De Wereldvrede' ('The World Peace'), of which he is managing partner.

De Schryver is primarily known by larger audiences for his performances in both internationally successful TV-series "Code 37" and feature film "Hasta La Vista (Come as you are)". Before developing his own work, De Schryver acted in theatershows by Luc Perceval, Koen De Sutter and Piet Arfeuille and in filmproductions by Jakob Verbruggen, Tim Mielants, Nic Balthazar and Geoffrey Enthoven.

Roman Vaculik

Actor Associate Artist Roman Vaculik trained at the Flinders University Drama Centre, and is a veteran of stage, screen and television. He has been involved in the entire creative process and is an original cast member of Fight Night. Romans most recent film credits include, The King is Dead, a feature film directed by Rolf de Heer. He has also performed in Three Sisters, romeo&juliet, Mnemonic and Attempts On Her Life for STCSA, 4:48 Psychosis (BRINK), The Hit (Malthouse), Checklist for an Armed Robber (Vitalstatistix), and The Return, The Half Windsor and Marathon for Freshtrack Prod.

Michai Geyzen

Actor (1983°) studied at the theatre academy of Maastricht (The Netherlands). After getting the degree of Bachelor in Theatre, he proceeded his studies to become a Master. His first professional play as a director was called 'über-ich', which will be playing throughout Belgium in 2015-2016. He also played leading rolls in 'Hendrik' (Studio Gebroed, Boulevard festival), 'Romeo and Julia' (Hans van de Boom) and 'En we stierven nog lang en gelukkig' (Sermoen). Fight Night is his first OG-show.

Suzanne Grotenhuis

Actor (1985) is a dutch actress born in Amsterdam. She moved to Belgium at the age of 18 to studie at the Antwerp Drama school. After her graduation in 2007 she has been working as a freelance actress for different companies. She worked with Guy Cassiers at the Toneelhuis and Ivo van Hove in Amsterdam. In 2013 she won a price with her own theaterpiece 'Het Zwarte Woud Forever', a monologue that she wrote and directed. She also has her own theatergroup based in Antwerp. They are currently touring with their project 'Heimat'.

FIGHT NIGHT – AN INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR ALEXANDER DEVRIENDT

by Katrien Brys

“In spite of everything, I still believe in change”

ALEXANDER DEVRIENDT: “I was triggered by a quote of the Flemish nationalist Geert Bourgeois, of all people. He remarked that, during the protracted government formation of 2010-2011, Belgium had better move towards a two-party system, like in America or, before recently, the UK. After 541 days without a government, it seemed that this could facilitate political decision making considerably. Left wing versus right wing. But then again, I don't envy the political situation in America or the UK. These considerations are only subliminally present in the performance, but the 'plot' does evolve around the tyranny of the majority. The majority that suddenly gets to dictate things after elections and they often act as if their opinion represents everybody's opinion. An important core question is: do you trust the majority here tonight? Another point is the way characters like Mitt Romney succeed in manipulating the public opinion and marketing their own personality in order to divert attention from their points of view.”

This sounds like you're going to organize a basic lesson in democracy.

‘No, we assume that most people who come to *Ontroerend Goed* are aware of these basic political principles. It's much more a performance about 'what determines our voting behaviour' without losing sight of the game element. Rather than a lesson in democracy, I'd call it a dissection, focused on your own vote. From the start till the end, as a spectator, you'll get the feeling that *Fight Night* is about you – or about yourself as a voter. During the first round, the audience can only rely on the first impression of the candidates. Way too early, because they haven't got a clue what these candidates stand for, but that corresponds with reality. What do you get if you hear people talking about politicians, at the baker's or the butcher's? “He looks pretty serious” or “he's a nice guy” or “what a prick”! There's a moment in the performance where you have to vote purely for ideas, without knowing which of the candidates represents them.. During the whole performance barely one political term is mentioned, to avoid that it becomes a lesson in democratic principles.

What did you watch or read for inspiration?

‘How to Win an Election’ by Cicero, still relevant today. A few books by republican campaign strategians. And then there's ‘The Life and Death of Democracy’ by John Keane, a must-read for everyone who is interested in politics. It opened my eyes to a lot of things and it's certainly one of the underlayers in *Fight Night*. Before I started working on the performance, I toyed with the idea to give that one remaining candidate the fictional power to work out operational solutions for, let's say, the climate crisis and to apply it. As some sort of enlightened despot, yes. But in spite of my frustrations about the insufficiencies of the democratic system, Keane's book made me realize that for now, we're condemned to it. To paraphrase the legendary words of Winston Churchill: ‘democracy is the worst form of government’, but the alternatives are much worse. You need to embrace a certain form of populism, if you want to get somewhere as a political party. You need to

convince the ‘people’, if you want to get votes and that means you’re obliged to participate in the game.

That reminds me of what Leo McGarry says to president Bartlett in The West Wing: 'It's not our job to appeal to the lowest common denominator, it's our job to raise it.'

‘I totally agree with that. It’s not because you use popular strategies to convince the voters that your message necessarily needs to be flat and unsubstantiated.’

I think you’re becoming more and more political in your themes, that there’s an evolution from the more internal to the external.

‘That’s related to increasing self- confidence. I’m finally able to admit to myself: I can do it, I can make good shows. That creates freedom. From that point on, you’re asking yourself automatically what exactly you want to give to the audience. What do you want to convey when you demand 12 euro and one hour and a half of their attention? Theatre always needs to be a metaphor for something that’s going on out there, in the real world. If it’s purely about aesthetics or the intellectual, I’m out. Internal, for instance, fell a little bit short on that level: it doesn’t communicate much about the world outside the theatre. Oddly enough, they love it in Anglosaxon countries, but that’s perhaps because they have little experience with one-on-one theatre. For Flemish theatre lovers it’s a bit yesterday’s news. A Game of You seems more to the point, because it says a lot about self-image and the way you’re being manipulated by your surroundings, but also by media and publicity.

A heavy question: do you think every generation carries a responsibility or an intellectual obligation to change the world they live in for the better?

‘Personally, I’d replace the word ‘change’ with the word ‘question’. I’m thinking of people like Christopher Hitchens or (pdw), who were constantly preoccupied with social criticism. It wasn’t always in a style that appealed to me and I didn’t always agree with their opinions, but that doesn’t really matter. As it doesn’t matter whether they were on the political left or right side. People like that are rare, even over the generations. Not everybody has that intelligence, that verbal power and the persistence to keep on hitting nails on the head. I don’t count myself among them. I’m a theatre maker, not a great intellectual thinker and nor a social critic. In the best case I give food for thought to the people who come to see my shows, as some sort of service-hatch. A week ago I met a girl who works with youngsters. She had seen All That Is Wrong and told me she had taken an awful lot from it. Honestly: that’s more than enough for me.

Pressematerial (Fotos in druckfähiger Auflösung und Pressedossiers zu den einzelnen Produktionen) stehen auf <http://www.auawirleben.ch/medien.html> für Sie zum Herunterladen bereit.

Für weitere Auskünfte, Unterlagen zu den Produktionen, Bild- und eventuell Videomaterial wenden Sie sich bitte an +41 (0) 31 318 62 16 resp. nicolette.kretz@auawirleben.ch. Wir stehen gerne zu Ihrer Verfügung. Spezielle Wünsche wie Interviews oder Porträts melden Sie bitte frühzeitig an.

PRESSE

Fight Night' develops into a vital exploration (...) into why we cling to our democratic institutions despite their failures, and what the alternatives might look like; and how, in the end, we deal with dissent, in a big society or a small room where the majority have decided, but a large minority beg to disagree. **The Scotsman - Joyce McMillan ******

Zonder ook maar één politieke referentie maakt Ontroerend Goed in 'Fight Night' een zorgwekkende analyse van de consensuspolitiek waarin ons democratisch bestel is verzeild geraakt. Dat is straf. **De Morgen - Evelyne Coussens ******

Meer dan over de acteurs op scène zegt 'Fight Night' immers iets over ons, het publiek over hoe we als individu en groep be- en veroordelen, afstraffen of gedogen. **De Standaard - Liv Laveyne ******

A cross between Big Brother and an Italian general election. **The Independent - Paul Vallely ******

...It is shown that the democratic process is inevitably doomed to destroy choice. **The List ******

...It shows how easily the majority can gang up on the minority when threatened, and the overlap between democracy and autocracy. Democracy is all well and good, but only when you form a part of the majority. **Culture Wars - Daniel Hutton**

...'Fight Night', like all Ontroerend Goed's productions leaves many divided, but it can't be denied that it is a company which continually pushes the ways in which it interacts with audience, and with this produces challenging work that questions and provokes. **A Younger Theatre - Jake Orr ******

...Who the hell needs consensus politics if there's a revolution to be had? **Total Theatre - Dorothy Max Prior**