

Dampfzentrale Kesselhaus

SA 11.5. | 18:00

SA 11.5. | 21:00

SO 12.5. | 17:00

SO 12.5. | 20:00

Ontroerend Goed (Gent)

£¥€\$

Mit: Joeri Smet, Angelo Tijssens, Karolien De Bleser, Samir Veen, Hannah Boer, Aurélie Lannoy, Joeri Heegstra, Britt Bakker, Charlotte De Bruyne, Bastiaan Vandendriessche, Eleonore Van Godtsenhoven, Robin Keyaert, Max Wind, Sjef van Schie, Aaron J Gordon | **Regie:** Alexander Devriendt | **Skript:** Joeri Smet, Angelo Tijssens, Karolien De Bleser, Alexander Devriendt & Ensemble | **Texte:** Joeri Smet | **Technik:** Babette Poncelet, Iben Stalpaert, Joyce Rijpert | **Kostüme:** Astrid Peeters | **Musik:** Johannes Genard | **Szenografie:** vormen & Nick Mattan | **Dramaturgie:** Koba Ryckewaert, Zach Hatch, Julie Behaegel | **Produktionsleitung:** David Bauwens

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

Sprache: Englisch

Dauer: 1h 50min

Dass Banken ganz schön viel Macht haben und unter anderem aus nichts Geld machen, das ist inzwischen ja bereits Allgemeinwissen. Aber wie verhält es sich eigentlich genau mit dem internationalen Finanzmarkt? Wieso werden Währungen plötzlich wertlos und was passiert mit einem bankrotten Staat? In £¥€\$ können Sie für einmal bei den ganz grossen Entscheidungen mitmischen. Wie die Mächtigen sitzen Sie am Spieltisch des Kasinos der Weltökonomie. Jede*r Spieler*in ist eine Bank, jeder Tisch ein Staat. Wir zocken los und erleben den Turbo-Kapitalismus aus der Innensicht. Selten wurde schneller und einfacher Geld gemacht und selten war die Fallhöhe so hoch. Selbstverständlich werden Sie da verantwortungsbewusst handeln. Endlich können Sie mal zeigen, wie Sie es besser machen würden! Oder packt Sie vielleicht doch das Spielfieber? Leuchten in Ihren Augen vielleicht doch die Pfund-, Yen-, Euro- und Dollarzeichen auf? Bringen Sie auf alle Fälle etwas Bargeld mit. Wahrscheinlich bietet sich eine gute Gelegenheit, es kurzzeitig anzulegen.

Seit **Ontroerend Goed** 2011 mit A Game of You zum ersten Mal bei aua war, haben die Belgier*innen hier eine kleine Fangemeinde. Die letzten sechs Gastspiele haben die grosse Vielfalt ihrer Stücke gezeigt, denn die Gruppe sucht für jede Produktion eine neue Form, die zum Inhalt passt.

Einfach gesagt:

Es ist schwierig zu verstehen, wie Banken funktionieren. Und wieso schwanken Währungen eigentlich? In £¥€\$ (LIES = Lügen) kann man auf spielerische Art sehen, wie das geht. Und für einmal kann man so tun, als wäre man selber eine oder einer von den Mächtigen.

ZUM STÜCK

[D]

Aus nichts Geld machen – um diese Fähigkeit der Banken ranken sich zahllose Mythen. Selbst der Crash von 2008 konnte dem Glauben in die Funktionstüchtigkeit des Bankensystems nichts anhaben. «Too big to fail», hiess es damals, und die Banken wurden mit dem Geld der Steuerzahler gerettet. Lässt sich unser Vertrauen ins Geld denn durch gar nichts erschüttern? Das flämische Theaterkollektiv Ontroerend Goed lädt uns zu einem Spiel ein, das unser Geldvertrauen grösstmöglicher Hitze aussetzt: Jede*r Spieler*in ist eine Bank. Wir setzen uns zum Zocken an einen Tisch und erleben den Turbo-Kapitalismus aus der Innensicht. Selten wurde schneller und einfacher Geld gemacht, selten war die Gefahr des Verlusts so gross. «The best way to rob a bank, is to own one», wurde uns erzählt. Oder alles anders machen und aus dem Kasino der Weltökonomie die Revolution starten?

Inmitten kreisförmig angeordneter Spieltische sitzt die Börsenaufsicht. Sie notiert akribisch Gewinne und Verluste. Pro Tisch ernannt ein Croupier bzw. eine Croupière die jeweiligen Spielerinnen und Spieler zu Privatbankiers und fragt sie unverblümt nach vorhandenem Bargeld. Münzen und Scheine werden in bunte Jetons getauscht.

Die Produktion „£¥€\$“ versetzt das Publikum in ein interaktives Casino der internationalen Finanzwirtschaft: Jeder Tisch steht für einen fiktiven Staat, dessen ökonomisches Kapital vom Publikum immer wieder neu erwürfelt wird. Wer setzt wie viel? Wessen Bank startet mit welchem Kapital? Wie lässt sich aus Nichts Gewinn machen? Es darf gezockt werden. Der Markt ist offen. Die Logik des Spiels folgt kapitalistischen Regeln und ist folglich auf Gewinnmaximierung aus. Was aber, wenn die Würfel nicht so fallen, wie sie sollten? Kein Problem: neues Spiel, neues Glück. Der Croupier oder die Croupière hat frisches Geld. Noch mal, noch mehr, mehr Kredite, mehr Schuldscheine, immer weiter und weiter, bis zum Crash. Welchen Tisch wird es treffen?

Das belgische Performance-Kollektiv Ontroerend Goed macht aus dem Theaterraum einen Handelsraum, in dem sich ökonomische Spekulationen in ein verführerisches Spiel mit und um Geld verwandeln. Die Komplexität der Transaktionen steigert sich Schritt für Schritt. Die Mechanismen der internationalen Finanzmärkte bleiben für Laien immer zumindest ansatzweise verstehbar.

[E]

„The best way to rob a bank is to own one.“ (William K. Black)

The world is recovering from a deep financial crisis. Crises have occurred many times and in different regions in the history of capitalism, usually leading to profound questions about the functioning of the system and its flaws. In the latest crisis, often compared to the Great Depression in terms of impact and scale, a lot of criticism and even anger have been directed towards the bankers. Although mostly justified in its core, the criticism very often demonstrates a lack of knowledge about the way the system really works. In the turmoil surrounding the crisis, protest movements often fail to propose a clear, functional alternative to the current system. The result is an overall sense of powerlessness and the conviction that economy is too complex to understand. However, authors like Piketty and Ha-Joon Chang or a range of documentary makers have found ways to explain the system in a transparent, simple way. There is one ‘but’. They appeal to the intellect and pay little attention to the emotional dimension of money. We believe there is an opportunity to engage an audience both intellectually and emotionally in the complexities and transparent simplicity of the monetary reality.

First of all, by providing and insight into how the system works and secondly, by exploring the emotional core of greed, adrenaline and self-realization that drives the people operating in the system. In the end, bankers are human and altogether not so different from us. From this point of view, the financial system is more like an uncontrollable beast with the capacity to possess people. It is exactly this “possession” that we want to make tangible in the performance £¥€\$. A trial version at the Maastricht drama school proved that it is possible to seduce people who otherwise don’t care about money or feel strongly against capitalist ideology to engage in the game of hedge funds and stocks,

high risk investments and toxic financial products. In the performance, there's no judgement – comparable to Fight Night – of the audience's decisions.

Choices are offered and the spectators/participants are free to decide. It has been a while, to be precise: 2010's A Game of You, since Ontroerend Goed created another interactive, personal performance in an "off-stage" setting. This is due to the fact that the company works around a basic idea and then looks for the ideal form to present the idea. With £¥€\$, the basic idea is to create an interactive simulation of the financial world history of the past 100 years and provide an insight into the intricacies of the monetary system and its impact on our lives. We believe that the best way to present this idea is to immerse the audience into the reality of the financial world and allow the spectators to become players in the 'game' of high-stake capitalism. The form, therefore, is a casino with tables – or rather, an illegal poker backroom.

We envisage 6 to 12 tables of 7 participants, an audience of 42 to 84 per performance, which would be sufficient to create complexity without losing the personal touch. As an audience member, you share a table with six others and a croupier. You're asked to put all your money on the table. Everything is counted and then you're asked to wager an amount (e.g. between 1 & 20 dollars/euro/pound). You get one chip for every unit you wagered and it's explained that you can win the money from your neighbours. The company doesn't win anything. All the wagered money is put in a box in the middle and represents the gold standard of the chips you play with. Then the rules are explained by your personal croupier. As the game begins, you're invited to play a banker. The poorest at the table becomes the government, the currency is named after the richest player in the whole game.

The structure of the game implicitly follows the post-WWII economic history. Deregulation, for example, is made tangible by the players paying the government money to be allowed higher risks. Strongly involved in the rush of the game, the participants feel eager to push these measures – because it's only human... even if these things happened in real life with sometimes disastrous results. In this way, all financial machinations and products are introduced as rules of the game: devaluation, inflation, hedge funds, sub-prime loans... Huge profits of one player inevitably affect the other players and the whole game, beyond the separate tables, representing separate markets. The intricately connected system provokes a race to survive or a race to make the most money. Markets run dry, money gets frozen and remorselessly, the light above each table will go out, as a sign of collapse. At the end of the game, every player will have more chips than he or she started with. A board has kept track of the rising price of the dollar, which, just like a rising gold price, seems like a good thing. However, exchanging their chips on the way out, the players get more or less the same amount of money as they invested. This proves the point that money is a convention, an agreement, a man-made and therefore relative thing. There is no more gold than there was a hundred years ago. However, there's a lot more money – and it's worth less.

ZUR GRUPPE: ONTROEREND GOED

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Ontroerend Goed ist ein belgisches Künstlerkollektiv, das sowohl intime, individuelle Performances als auch groß angelegte Theaterabende kreiert. Auf diese Weise lotet die Gruppe die Grenzen und Codes der verschiedenen Künste aus und öffnet das Theater für neue Zuschauergruppen. In jedem Stück sucht es eine neue Form, die zum Inhalt und Thema des Abends passt. Der Name Ontroerend Goed ist ein Wortspiel, das so viel bedeutet wie „Fühl dich rein“.

[E]

“The most consistently challenging theatre-makers of the past decade.”
(The Scottish Journal of Performance)

Theatre-performance-group Ontroerend Goed (a punning name, roughly translated as “Feel Estate”) produces self-devised work grounded in the here and now, inviting their audiences to participate as

well as observe. They first emerged on the international scene in 2007, with ‘The Smile Off Your Face’, a one-on-one show in which the audience is tied to a wheelchair and then blindfolded. Their hit show ‘Once and For All...’ was an uncompromising celebration of raw teenage energy on stage. With every new piece of work, Ontroerend Goed provides an intense experience constructed in reality; life goes on during the performance. The company has won numerous prizes across Europe and has hit New York, Sydney, London and Hong Kong to critical acclaim.

Their work is currently being performed in countries around the world. Ontroerend Goed functions as a collective guided by the artistic director Alexander Devriendt. Convinced that every idea deserves its own brand of artistic expression, the company cherishes a sense of ownership for every single contributor to their work, from actors to light designers, scenographers to conceptual thinkers. Ontroerend Goed fabricates possible realities that question how we as individuals position ourselves in the world today. Covering a history of the universe in one evening, turning spectators into voters who eliminate actors, guiding strangers through a labyrinth of mirrors and avatars to meet themselves, the company has made it its trademark to be unpredictable in content and form.

Ontroerend Goed has been touring the world for the last 15 years with their personal trilogy (The Smile Off Your Face, Internal, A Game of You), Audience, A History Of Everything (with Sydney Theatre Company), with their teenage hits Once And For All We’re All Going To Tell You Who We Are So Shut Up And Listen, Teenage Riot and All That Is Wrong, the political game show Fight Night, the palindrome-trip Are we not drawn onward to new era, the feminist manifesto Sirens and their most recent show World Without Us. Ontroerend Goed is Alexander Devriendt, Joeri Smet, Charlotte De Bruyne, Karolien De Bleser, Angelo Tijssens, David Bauwens, Wim Smet, Babette Poncelet and Karen Van Ginderachter.

An Interview with Alexander Devriendt (by Bo Marlijnen)

After the large-scale theatre show are we not drawn onward to new era and the more classic, text-based performance World Without Us, Ontroerend Goed creates another interactive show. A return to the roots?

A.D.: Ontroerend Goed has a golden rule: we look for the best form to tell our story. The Personal Trilogy was a search to make spectators reflect about themselves through a personal experience, but also to release 1-on-1 theatre from the bracket of intimate cuddling and create a dramaturgically strong theatre show in that form. £¥€\$ takes us one step further: the interactive concept is employed to talk about a system in the world, to make it touchable and comprehensible. To translate the complex razzmatazz of high finance into a theatrical experience, I thought I would be more useful to immerse spectators into it and let them play the role of a big investor. In that way, they can try and look for solutions, instead of observing the complexity from a distance. It adds the quality of an emotional quest to the rational exposition.

The financial world is a hot issue in the press and on social media. What do you want to add to the subject?

A.D.: I read a lot of one-sided or simplistic comments about the financial world, both in press and on the internet. Personally, I got a bit frustrated about the fact that I myself didn’t quite understand the intricacies of the system. So I started reading - about what money really is, how the financial world functions, what went wrong during the crisis. It’s such a complex system, with a lot of abuse but also a lot to offer. £¥€\$ invites the spectator to build an insight into how things work, step by step, in order to take an informed position of their own. Forcing the super rich to give away all their money is probably totally useless, but it might be worth considering to relieve certain debts. By putting the audience in the position of the bankers or the infamous “1%”, I’m not forcibly looking for sympathy, but I do want to make the inevitability or strict logics of that world tangible. It’s partly motivated by greed, but we tend to forget it’s also about the desire to shape the world and create opportunities. (by Bo Marlijnen)

You are a vigorous board gamer yourself, a passion that's shared among the members of your company. £¥€\$ is again a game, with a certain roleplay quality for the audience. How do you develop an idea like this?

A.D.: Games are theatrically interesting because they provoke interhuman emotions as well as thoughts and insights into certain systems. You could say there are gamelike qualities to the financial world, money could be considered a score system in an enormous, world-wide virtual game. As a gamer, I think it's a challenge to transpose that reality into a theatrical 'play', that makes you both feel and think. We've read a lot of literature during rehearsals - The Ascent of Money by Ferguson, Debt by David Graeber, articles of Naomi Klein, Joris Luyendijk, Paul Mason's Postcapitalism -, talked to experts, but we've also played a lot of boardgames. This gave us a good idea of how you can transpose big, abstract notions to simple, explainable actions at a game table, without sacrificing the complexity. The performers in this show are more like dealers, that teach you by means of poker chips how you change high risk investments into toxic products that you can sell at other tables. In this game formula, we don't need to hold the spectators' hands too much, they call the shots themselves. It's that boundary between performance and game that's exciting for us. We've explored this in A Game Of You – also a game - and in Fight Night, but never as profoundly as now.

The title, £¥€\$, seems to express a certain distrust in the financial system. Does the performance take a strong position about it?

A.D.: Ontroerend Goed remains loyal to the notion that a performance should be open enough to allow the audience to discover its own truth in it or to make its own projections onto it. In this sense, the title £¥€\$ is more of a provocation than a judgement. There is a second layer, though. It has to do with the nature of money in itself. In whatever form money appears, it's always a convention, an agreement between people: this measurable value against that measurable value, sir x owes sir y that much, this service or these commodities are worth this much of our currency... in the end, everything's based on trust. And what is more destructive in a system of trust, than lies? It's shocking for many people, to come to the conclusion that the number on the digital screen of a cash machine only has meaning, if everybody keeps believing in it...

www.ontroerendgoed.be

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

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