

PUSH+ - OPEN CALL Guidelines
LAB 2: FAILURE
13 - 22 September 2019



Co-funded by the
Creative Europe Programme
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Information about PUSH+

PUSH+ is a Creative Europe-funded project led by Imagineate (Scotland) alongside Krokusfestival (Belgium), The Ark (Ireland), Aaben Dans (Denmark), Scenekunstbruket (Norway) and associate partner Bangkok International Children's Festival (Thailand). PUSH+ will stimulate European dialogue and initiate new artistic ideas and performances around three important topics in performance for young audiences – **Home, Failure and Different Bodies**. These are topics that push us to take more risks as makers and presenters, to address the underrepresentation of different lives and bodies on our stages and to tell stories that really connect with children and who they are.

This application is for the **Failure Lab** which will take place in Hasselt, Belgium. Artists will arrive in Hasselt on Friday 13 September and depart on Sunday 22 September 2019.

All artists will be paid a fee of £1,000 plus return travel to the Lab from your home country and all accommodation for the duration of the Lab.

You can find out more about the project on the dedicated PUSH+ website (www.pushproject.eu).

Information about the Failure Lab:

This Lab will bring together fifteen artists based in five different countries in Europe to explore ideas around Failure in theatre and dance for young audiences.

“Congratulations, you have failed!” Why does it sound strange to accept this? Why do we consider failure as inherently negative? When and why did society develop the ideal of complete and everlasting success as the norm of human achievement? And when and why did society impose that ideal on all human beings as the standard of life? The best student, the best son, the best daughter, the best father, the best mother, the best

family, the best friends, the best teacher, the best director, the best artist, simply the best. The results are terrifying: in the Swiss rich and wealthy capital of Zurich 80% of primary school children are in therapy. Not because they are a country with more problems but because when parents see their children are not perfectly successful in maths, in French writing, in IT-applications, in sports, in arts, they cannot face this reality. These well-off parents then provide their sons and daughters with highly personalised therapeutic sessions.

There seems nothing wrong with talent nor with doing one's best, there is something wrong when perfectness becomes the standard. Clearly, not being allowed to fail puts unbelievable psychical and mental stress on individuals and social structures.

The FAILURE LAB will explore the notion of failure

- what is a so-called failure & why is it perceived negatively?
- what and who causes 'failure'?
- how does it have an impact on children & what's the impact on teachers and parents?
- how and when is failure a negative notion in our own artistic field: how many 'failures' is an artist allowed to by the industry?
- how can Samuel Beckett's 'Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.' be a source of creative inspiration to fail better?
- can we make a beautiful failure or turn a failure into a thing of beauty?
- how can we use the diverse aspects of the failure concept in performances TYA?

The LAB will enable a lot of input, a visit to a children's home and a sports club, dialogue opportunities with professionals (sociologist/therapist/Flemish children's rights commissioner), teachers as well as parents. We also plan a workshop opportunity with local children and teenagers. The LAB will be closed with an opportunity to present some material, also making use of one or more of the three 'formats' that are in the PUSH+ focus: participatory, site-specific and intergenerational. Through these formats we will play with the ways in

which we create and present material, who performs it and how we engage with the audience. You can chose to think about one or more of them in your ideas around FAILURE or to select other forms of performance that interest you. Information about these formats can be found on the PUSH+ website - <https://www.pushproject.eu/about-push-plus/formats/>.

The PUSH+ partners will join the LAB in the final stage. In addition to the LAB content, the schedule will include a welcome meal for all artists, a day off in Hasselt (or elsewhere as this is a small country: Brussels or Antwerp are 1 hour by train, Liège 45', Maastricht 1.15h,...) and a final meal with artists and PUSH+ project partners.

LAB INSPIRATORS

At this moment we are in full preparation of the LAB. Dramaturg Gerhard Verfaillie will facilitate the input/conversational parts of the LAB. As a dramaturg he worked with/for Leporello, FABULEUS, LAIKA, Joke Laureyns & Kwint Manshoven and tout petit. Emely Alders will take care of the production. The LAB will invite 4 experienced artists from different fields (dance, theatre, music), who have an outspoken connection with the theme, to join the group for one or more days. In that sense we are able to explore the FAILURE theme from the most diversified angles. Two of the artists are known already:

JOKE LAUREYNS

Joke Laureyns is a choreographer, with a background in philosophy. Together with a choreographer Kwint Manshoven, she forms kabinet K, a company that focuses on dance performances with both professional dancers and children on stage. Their dance starts from concrete daily actions and small gestures interwoven with game elements. The fact that the cast also consists of children makes their dance accessible to young and old. Each of their creations literally grows from the steps that the young dancers take. Just because organic and intuitive forms such an important aspect in their dance language, both choreographers enjoy working with children or older bodies that are not (or less) drawn by certain behavioral patterns or a dance technique. At this moment,

kabinet K is touring with Horses and Invisible, and the rehearsals for as long as we are playing will start soon.

JEF VAN GESTEL

Jef Van gestel graduated in 2004 as a theater maker at the Maastricht Theater Academy. For his graduation performance Tuttefrut, he received the Ton Lutz Prize as the most promising directing talent. He also made and played performances at The House of Burgundy, fABULEUS, Hetveem theater, RO Theater, LAB Utrecht, tg MAX and Kopergietry. He is also one of the three artistic directors of Flemish TYA-company Tuning People. The show Leeghoofd that he made at Tuning People was selected for The Theater Festival 2014 and Voetbal op Hoge Hakken (Football on high heels Kopergietry) won the VSCD mime prize 2015.

Information on the selection process

A panel will select three artists based in Scotland to take part in this Lab. All applicants will hear if they have been selected by **Monday 17 June 2019**.

The panel will include Imagine staff and external, freelance artists.

Failure Residency (5 - 20 January 2020)

After each Lab, all participating artists will be invited to apply to take part in an associated 2-week residency, offering selected artists paid time and space to develop production ideas and collaborations from the Lab with support, advice and feedback. The Failure residency will take place in Ireland between 5 and 19 January 2020 hosted The Ark Dublin. Up to 4 artists will be selected, as individuals or as a collaboration with fellow Lab artists. This will allow the artists time and space to research and develop their ideas in a quiet and safe environment. The Ark will be closely connected to the residency both in terms of production arrangements (organisation, production, venues, logistical needs) and feedback. They will discuss with the artists all possibilities and opportunities to connect them to a network of schools, children, parents and invite them to meet local artists and see shows.

FAQs

- **What kind of artists are you looking for?**

We are looking for artists involved in making theatre and dance, ideally if you have made work for young audiences before or can share with us your motivation for making work for them now. We would like to find a group of artists at different stages of their career although due to the intensity of an international residency, it is unlikely to be suitable for artists still studying or who have very recently graduated.

In previous Lab we have invited one or two designers, musicians and filmmakers so we are open to include a wide range of artists though the focus will be on the making of theatre and dance performance.

Ultimately, if you have experience in leading the creation of performance for children, or have a strong desire to do so using your artform, then we would like to hear from you.

- **What information should I include in my application?**

We are looking for artists who are excited about creating theatre and dance for children and can show this through work they have creatively led or been involved in. We would love to see examples of your work (images, production copy, film clips, reviews etc) so include them in your application. We are also looking for artists who have a genuine interest in the Lab topic, who have interesting perspectives and ideas with a strong line of enquiry. Please do not send CVS or any other additional documents.

- **How will the panel assess the applications?**

The panel will talk through each application thinking about these key criteria:

- *Quality of ideas around the topic of Failure, and how they intersect with theatre and dance for young audiences.*
- *Track record of work as an artist.*
- *Proven interest in theatre and/or dance for young audiences.*
- *Potential impact of this Lab.*

This means we are interested in hearing about your artistic work and what interests you. Tell us about what inspires you about the topic of Home and what your main interest in exploring this would be. We are not looking for academic essays or perfectly written English, focus on getting your ideas across and who you are as an artist.

- **Is there a word count/time limit?**

While there isn't a word limit for your answers (or time limit for filmed/recorded ones) we would ask you to consider the panel and think about concise answers. Think about the key facts/opinions/ideas you want the panel to know and the best way for them to be clear and not lost in paragraphs of information.

- **Do all artists have to stay in the Lab accommodation?**

Yes, all the participants (even those who live in Belgium) will be booked into the same accommodation. This is to allow all the Lab participants to live together for a week, to facilitate deeper discussion and opportunities to get to know each other and the Lab leaders.

If any of this is a problem for you, or you have specific needs that you would like to talk to us about, please get in touch with us or let us know in your application.

- **Do I have to be available for all the dates from 13 -22 of September 2019?**

Yes, apart from the day off, we require full attendance. Artists should arrive in Hasselt on Friday 13 September and depart on Sunday 22 September. Working time in the Lab, including one day off, is between Saturday 14 and Saturday 21 September 2019.

- **How many places are there?**

There are 15 places in total for this Lab with 3 places for artists based in Scotland. 3 artists will also be selected by each of our project partners in Ireland, Belgium, Norway and Denmark.

- **Can I apply for more than one Lab as I'm interested in more than one topic?**

Yes, you can apply for more than one Lab though priority will be given to those who haven't taken part in a previous one. If you are really interested in other topics and are not selected for this Lab, you are welcome to apply for the other Labs.

- **How should I apply by video if I choose that option?**

You can film your answers to the three questions in the application and upload them to Vimeo or YouTube (password protected). It doesn't matter at all about the quality of the filming (phone footage is fine as long as we can clearly hear you), we are only interested in what you have to say. Email us the link to your film within the application form (so we have your details and biog) along with your photograph.

- **Can I apply for this Lab if I'm not based in Scotland?**

Priority will be given to artists based, and making work in, Scotland. If you would like to apply from other parts of the UK please contact us before applying. If you are based in Belgium, Ireland, Norway or Denmark you can contact us to be put in touch with our partner in your country.

- **How accessible is the Lab?**

Both the Lab venue and the artist accommodation are fully accessible and we welcome applications from artists with a disability. Please get in touch with us if you would like to discuss your accessibility needs.

How to apply

Fill in the Home Lab application form and send it with your photograph to push@imagine.org.uk by the deadline of 5pm on Tuesday 4 June

We aim to ensure the application and selection process is straightforward and fair. All applicants will be offered feedback from the panel.

If you have any questions about the process, or the project in general, please email Fiona Ferguson (Creative Development Director, Imagine) at fiona@imagine.org.uk