



Opera Circus

Centro
Studi
Sereno
Regis
ODV

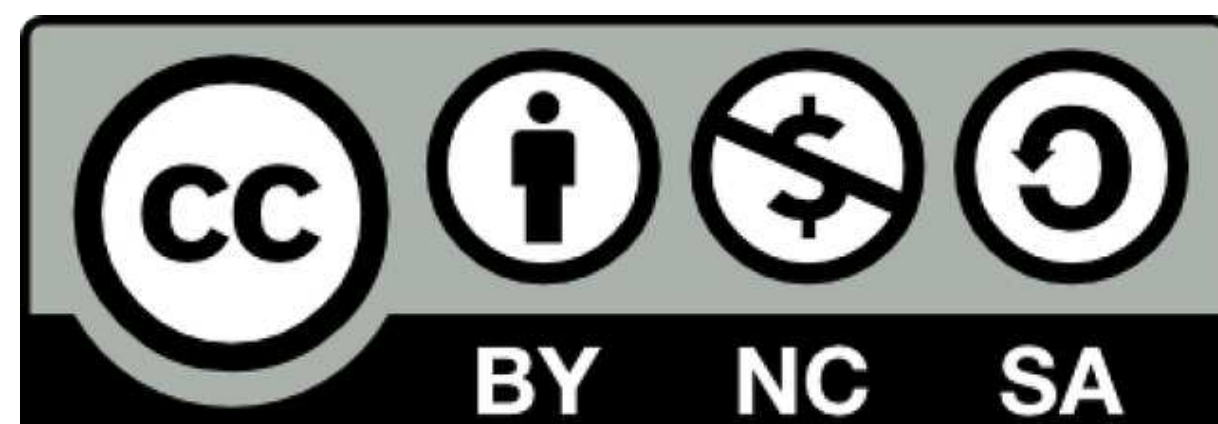


TAKE
P-

PARTICIPATORY ARTS IN YOUTH WORK

ACTIVITIES
TOOLKIT

CONTRIBUTIONS
OF EXPERTS



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CONTENTS

- Introduction to the Project
- About the Participatory Arts
- Contributions of the Experts
- Activities inspired by Participants

Partners of the Project

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

The COVID period affected the youth group very severely, not clinically but socially; many were "left behind" and were those with the strongest frailties. Culture has also suffered a very strong backlash, with major losses of jobs and opportunities. The risk is that culture will become increasingly elitist, making it even more difficult for young people to enjoy it.

According to OECD's recommendations (Culture shock: COVID-19 and the cultural and creative sectors) the most interesting developments may come from cross-sectoral projects, between the educational and artistic-cultural spheres.

So we asked ourselves what were the most inclusive artistic approaches, educational strategies to leave no one behind, and thus develop a stronger and more resilient dimension of youth empowerment and participation. We found an answer in participatory art.

The objectives that accompanied the implementation of the project are thus multiple:

- to disseminate the participatory approach among European youth and cultural organizations as a replicable and flexible good practice in different contexts,
- to promote the professional and personal development of youth workers in intercultural and marginal contexts through the use of participatory arts,

- to raise awareness among artists and cultural organizations about the potential of the arts in youth work.

- to empower youth expressing themselves through the arts in an international context,
- to engage youth with fewer opportunities and those with multiple disadvantages and disabilities, in a creative path.

Participatory art is thus intended to become a tool for active citizenship, aimed especially at those young people who do not feel they can make a difference. In this. In this direction, can it also become a language used by young people to look at social reality from another perspective and activate for change?

CHAPTER 2

ABOUT THE PARTICIPATORY ARTS

To participate, that is to take part. To something, even and above all to existence. Big words if they were in the present, but in the Sixties, when it started, they were not out of place, it was not a journalistic effort. Especially considering the work of Brazilian director Augusto Boal (1931-2009), founder of the Teatro do Oprimido (Theater of the Oppressed).

The initiative was born in that period when in his homeland social things do not go well at all, especially for those who wish to express themselves, even critically, against the strong powers. Through theatrical techniques, Boal gathered communities in performance of dialogue and mutual listening, in order to encourage active citizenship.

Participatory art means just that, making art by involving people in the creative process and empowering them to give it social, political and emotional meaning. It intends to challenge the dominant form of art making in the West, in which a small class of professional artists make art while the public assumes the role of passive observer or consumer, that is, they buy the work of professionals in the marketplace. Participatory art delivers another concept: it does not presuppose trade in the work.

Participatory art has great potential, both for youth organizations that want to work with young people more effectively and for cultural organizations that want to make a contribution in nonformal education.

The reasons are manifold:

- it promotes inclusion and participation. We can all make art, just as we can all contribute to change in our societies;
- it helps young people to find their needs and identities;
- it offers young people the opportunity to implement languages other than cognitive and rational.

In other words, participatory art makes it possible to overcome language barriers, activate different forms of intelligence and creatively investigate social and relational processes. It represents, therefore, an important space for young people to meet and compare who can share and learn a lot from similarities with others and from differences.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE EXPERTS

Miranda Henderson and Alister O’Loughlin Prodigal Theatre and Urban Playground

Team (UPG)

Darren Abrahams - The Human Hive

Professor Lee-Ann Fenge - Centre for Seldom Heard Voices/Bournemouth University

Anna Golding - Fingerprint Dance

Tina Ellen Lee - Opera Circus UK / The Complete Freedom of Truth

MIRANDA HENDERSON AND ALISTER O'LOUGHLIN



ph. Robert Golden

We invited Miranda Henderson and Alister O'Loughlin to speak with us about their work in particular with at-risk communities of young people.

Their work spans physical adaptations of classic texts, as Prodigal Theatre, and outdoor Performance-Parkour choreography, as The Urban Playground Team. The company tours globally, teaching wherever they go, and are known for developing models of participation. They have both been part of the core team with Opera Circus for their work with The Complete Freedom of Truth, TCFT since 2013, an international long term youth arts programme.

Miranda trained as a dancer in the UK and at the Duncan Conservatoire, Prague. Alister trained as an actor in the UK and with a Serbian Laboratory Theatre. In 1999 they together returned to the UK and founded Prodigal Theatre with the aim of creating physical adaptations of classic texts. As well as their own work, both continue as freelance artists. Miranda has choreographed for Inspector Sands, directed for Lucinka Eisler, and for 3 years taught dance for actors at the Royal Central School of Speech & Drama. Alister has acted in Steven Berkoff's Ensemble, touring as Tiresias in Berkoff's adaptation of Oedipus. He also writes on the company's work, publishing in the Theatre, Dance & Performance Training Journal and elsewhere.

In 2017 the company moved to Par, Cornwall establishing The PAR-tee, a free festival of PAR- formance and PAR-ticipation. Also, The Emergent Ensemble, a programme contracting, training, and developing early-career artist and helping them to establish themselves as independent, self-sufficient performers & teachers. This programme was born out of Covid and also answers long-term issues with talent retention in Cornwall. It is specifically designed to support greater inclusion of those under-represented in the industry, particularly those from lower-socio economic backgrounds.

Members of the Ensemble are now touring in UPG Team shows On the Strandline (a Time & Tide Bells Commission), Tinnors (a show for young audiences celebrating Cornwall's industrial heritage and future), Rockers (A Doorstep Tour for local communities, performing where people live) and Seadogs (A Hall for Cornwall archive commission for family audiences which delights in telling real, local Pirate tales from a feminist perspective).

The company is hoping to open 'The Creation Works' a rehearsal and development centre that would role-model triple sustainability - environmentally, artistically, and economically.

Website:

www.prodigalupg.com

YouTube:

[//www.youtube.com/UPGTEAM](https://www.youtube.com/UPGTEAM)

DARREN ABRAHAMS



ph. Robert Golden

Darren Abrahams is a singer, coach, trauma therapist and trainer working internationally as a facilitator and project leader in the fields of personal, cultural and community development. Darren is co-founder of The Human Hive a CIC working with change making individuals and organisations to regenerate People, Places and Planet. He is on the steering team and leads on pastoral care for The Complete Freedom of Truth, an international youth-led project developing global youth citizenship through culture and the arts and is a trainer and Wellbeing Adviser for Musicians Without Borders where he trains musicians to use music for peace building. Darren is co-founder of the Songs From Home project, a new UK based intercultural ensemble exploring community building through music. Darren is an expert at making people feel safe while bringing communities together to heal.

In this project Darren supported youth leaders to understand their work in the context of wider political and social movements, by running both online and in person workshops sharing tools and knowledge to unlock the power of the arts for trauma regulation, community building and conflict resolution. He worked with the leadership team from Kosovan partner Termokiss to help them develop systems and structures to allow them to professionalise the running of their organisation and to address some long term communication issues. He resumed his pastoral care role during the residency on Portland, Dorset and was present to support any participants who were struggling with the process and to work with the facilitation team to ensure everyone was able to participate in safety.

Darren commissioned youth leader Shaniqua Benjamin to produce an episode of The Human Hive Podcast focused on the Portland residency. This episode questioned the omission of Arts and Culture from the UN Sustainable Development Goals, with interviews from several of the participants. Darren also created a podcast with Tina Ellen Lee of Opera Circus on the challenges of partnerships. You can hear both on iTunes and Spotify.

Websites:

<https://darrenabrahams.com>

<https://thehumanhive.org>

All social media platforms:

@humanhiveglobal

PROFESSOR LEE-ANN FENGE



ph. Robert Golden

Lee-Ann Fenge is Professor of Social Care in the Faculty of Health and Social Sciences. She is a Registered Social Worker and has always been committed to advancing the professional evidence base of social care practitioners. Her research has focused on participatory and arts based methods to engage with seldom heard voices, and she is passionate about working in partnership with those who use health and social care services to create new knowledge to inform practice.

Her research includes participatory arts-based projects with older LGBT citizens, young people with disabilities, and homeless people. Most recently she has been working on a number of funded projects exploring the impact of financial scams on vulnerable groups,. This includes working on the development of a learning tool for community health professionals to widen understanding of the risks posed by financial scams and how best to support vulnerable victims. She is also working on a project exploring mail scams with the Royal Mail, and has recently gained HEIF funding to use gamification to support learning tool development for both practitioners and older people about financial scams. She is currently a small research project exploring the impact of Brexit on the social care workforce. She is keen to explore novel ways of developing practitioner understanding of practice issues. Professor Fenge is also central to the work of the Centre for Seldom Heard Voices and it was in that capacity that she came to speak with us at the Study Visit.

The BU Research Centre for Seldom Heard Voices brings together academics from across different disciplines including social sciences and social work to engage with marginalised communities and to amplify often excluded or silenced voices. We have a strong track record of developing collaborative partnerships with communities and key stakeholders and for using participatory and co-created approaches. Our aim is to apply our research to real-world challenges to maximise societal impact.

Our research includes collaborations with looked after children, youth in the developing world or conflict areas, rough sleepers, substance users, transgender youth and LGBT+ communities, stigmatised and threatened minorities, immigrants and trafficking victims, disabled children and adults, older people, carers, and many more. Impact includes contributions to child and adult social care practice, influencing policy, theoretical contributions to conflict resolution and community engagement and empowerment in the UK and globally including Kosovo, Albania, Malaysia, Costa Rica, Nepal and Rwanda.

Centre for Seldom Heard Voices website:

<https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/research/centres-institutes/centre-seldom-heard-voices>

Film by Robert Golden:

<https://vimeo.com/798296523>

ANNA GOLDING

ph. Robert Golden



Since training at The Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Anna has been based in London and the South West working as a facilitator, performer, project leader and choreographer. Over the last twenty years, she has worked for organisations including Take Art, Activate Performing Arts, Pavilion Dance South West, The V&A Museum, Landance and Greenwich Dance Agency. She is passionate about integrated and mature dance, landscape and site responsive performance. In 2011 she set up No Limits offering dance and live music opportunities to people with learning disabilities in Dorset. Out of this has grown Fingerprint Dance, a vibrant inclusive performing arts organisation rooted in community and growing opportunities to create together. It believes in the unique potential of each individual regardless of age, ability or background – the unique potential in each fingerprint.

As a mature dancer herself, she is curious about how we tell stories with our bodies as we age and how this is represented in live performance. She has most recently worked with Rosemary Lee, Stacked Wonky and David Glass Ensemble. Anna has been working as a freelance community dance practitioner, performer and choreographer for more than 15 years in Dorset. She runs a number of dance groups with older people and adults with learning disabilities delivering participatory work that has a social impact. It was this work with several of her dancers and musicians from the No Limits dance company founded in 2011, that she explored this work with the Take Part Study visit youth workers creating a completely inclusive and quite joyous dance workshop.

<https://fingerprintdance.co.uk>

TINA ELLEN LEE

“Tina Ellen Lee FRSA (Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts) is an artistic director and producer of both performing arts, youth and community programmes and documentary films.



She is artistic director of Opera Circus, a successful experimental opera/music theatre company founded in 1991. As a performer and producer Tina toured all over the world with Opera Circus in various of the company's productions and has co-produced all of their work.

Tina's work with Nigel Osborne, Emeritus, Professor of Music, composer and human rights worker has led her to establish partnerships with other arts organisations and NGO's in the UK, Wider Europe and India. This is both for the creation of new work and to continue to explore the use of the arts and culture to encourage inter-cultural and ethnic understanding, particularly with young people. In 2015 Tina was awarded the European Citizens Prize by the President of the European Parliament. This is given to individuals or groups for displaying an outstanding commitment to promoting better mutual understanding and facilitating cross border or transnational cooperation within the European Union. Tina is a Winston Churchill/Finzi Fellow and a Fellow of Salzburg Global Seminars. Tina is an advocate for the importance of arts and culture in the UK and Internationally and is part of a large network of cultural activists, diplomats, politicians and others working to encourage social justice and social change through culture and the arts. Currently working to support the use of music as therapy for children suffering from trauma in Ukraine and developing the use of music and digital technology to tackle mental health.

In these dire times," I concluded, "asking what you can do for others is the best way to reach out for yourself... to be a co-creator of society and never just a consumer. It means always using the power of your intelligence, including your emotional intelligence, to make the call that matters, to ask what we can do for others – with love and justice." Anthony Barnett, writer journalist co-founder of Open Democracy.

This could be the cry from the heart of The Complete Freedom of Truth, a long-term programme of informal arts and social justice that works with young people, inspired by a visit to a group of young artists in Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2008. TCFT is now almost a separate entity to the founder of the programme, the artist led performing arts organisation Opera Circus, based in the UK which began work in 1991, but still under the wing of its umbrella organisation.

TCFT was founded by and for young people to provide informal arts and cultural activities. In 2022 we ran our last Erasmus + funded youth mobility project due to the idiocy of the ideologically driven loss of our membership alongside our EU family. The project was called Freedom is Participation in Power and it ran partly at the same time as Take P-Art, led by the Italian organisation Centro Studi Sereno Regis. We were introduced to them by a young Italian youth leader with whom we had worked through TCFT since 2016.

<http://thecompletfreedomoftruth.com>

This brought many benefits of crossing over a youth worker Study visit in Bridport, Dorset and a young people's arts and creative residency on the Island of Portland in England (Youth Mobility). We then participated in the training programme in Italy and a final co-led informal youth arts and cultural residency in Bratunac and Srebrenica in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

One of the subjects that came out of the Erasmus+ programmes in 2022 was how difficult good partnerships are to establish and negotiate. True partnerships are really difficult to create and sustain. They require so much honesty, trust, humility, resilience, sharing, joint values and principles, risk, bravery and much else including sharing cultural attitudes.

To be of any real value they have to last in the long term and not just be part of a quick 6 month project, most of which are of very little value anyway. When we did some research in the UK for an Erasmus KA2 Italian led programme (Get Close to Opera) in 2018/2019, we found that most Heads of Education and Participation programmes in the Arts, from the largest cultural organisation down to the single freelance artist, believed that to make real change it takes 10 years

The other conversation between partners and their artists/youth workers is about the different levels of understanding as to what informal arts education is and how it is taught. One day we were shouted at by a Greek Academic who said this could only be learnt in University; it was a formal academic study and without that informal arts were unteachable. This is the time it takes for a community to take control and create the change itself so it remains embedded and owned by that community. But, of course, no one is funding that kind of long-term change as the majority of what we are instructed to do by our funders is short term sticking plaster and far too bureaucratic, insisting on only quantifiable outcomes.

Most of these organisations are not aware of the current scientific evidence where data has been collected proving the benefits to the mind and body of the multiple ways to participate in music and the creative arts for mental health, well being, trauma, dementia, epilepsy, movement of all kinds for MS, Parkinson's Disease etc., and for the general vital purpose of human communication and the development of empathy and understanding of the other. We are aware, again with humility, that one area that the UK seems to be much more advanced is informal arts education and the importance of inclusion and access for those with disadvantage and/or disability, although we still have a long way to go. Sharing these ideas is always vital. With Get Close to Opera, we also published The Inclusive Workshop Process which is invaluable in learning about real inclusion actually means.

Working with Sereno Regis was a good experience because ultimately there was trust and difficult situations were resolved by honest actions as well as open conversations aimed at tackling problems and finding solutions. Differences in practice were admitted and still we found a way through to deliver what was a worthwhile, even though short term, piece of work.

ACTIVITIES TOOLKIT

Activity 1 - Theatre by Joana Knezevic, Bryony Moores O'Sullivan and Jacob Slaatto

Activity 2 - Dance by Zoe Cochrane

Activity 3 - Circus by Mica Martucci

Activity 4 - Physical Theatre by Laura Fatini

Activity 5 - Writing Workshop by Francesco Pipparelli and Benedetta Pisani

Activity 6 - Parkour by George Caprariu

Activity 7 - Collective murales Katie Knowd and Cari Nesbit

ACTIVITY 2 - THEATRE BY JOANA KNEZEVIC



ph. Robert Golden

Joana Knezevic is an actress and social theater performer who together with Bryony Moores O'Sullivan and Jacob Slaatto curated the theaterworkshop for children in Bratunac (Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Why is doing theater good for you?

Theater art represents an open space for everyone to overcome reluctance and expressive uncertainties, to improve individual motivation and self-esteem, to experiment with new communication possibilities, to learn methodologies of relaxation, concentration and control, to develop creativity and imagination, to express emotions in a space of freedom. Doing theater also means valuing what is perceived as negative because it is different or not approved by society, and learning to work in team with creative and non-competitive participation.

The three pillars of theater with children:

1. Doing conscience activities to build attunement and trust, and to learn about others' imaginations and dreams;
2. Learning to listen and be heard, to understand that listening deeply with attention can be most interesting and that if someone listens to us we feel good;
3. Exploring. Theater is freedom to try and try again, without fear of messing up an already predetermined script. Freedom to experiment with the many possibilities many ways of being on stage.

ACTIVITY 2 - DANCE BY ZOE COCHRANE



Zoe Cochrane is a contemporary dancer who has participated for many years in TCFT (The Complete Freedom of Truth) projects, by Opera Circus. In Take P-Art she curated a series of dance workshops with educators and teenagers in Bratunac (Bosnia and Herzegovina), who participated in the final sharing by bringing an dance based on improvisation observation of the people involved in the moment.

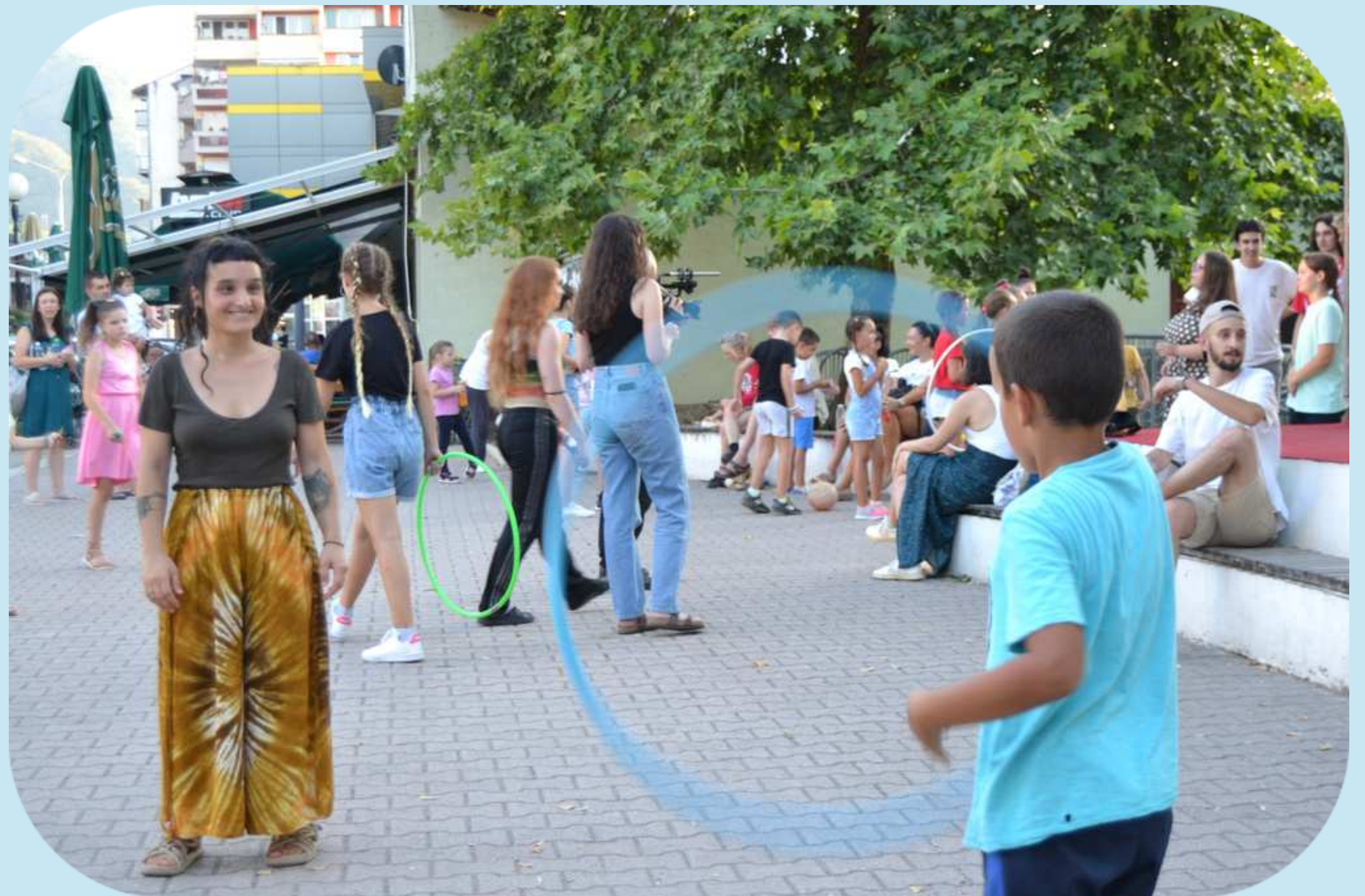
What is contemporary dance?

Contemporary dance can be defined as that form of expression that places freedom of movement and improvisation among its cardinal principles. The distinguishing character of contemporary dance from other styles certainly lies in the alternating force of movement (contraction) and release in which awareness of gesture assumes essential importance. Moreover, contemporary art in general is so called precisely because it reflects current society by becoming a carrier of a message that grows, evolves and changes according to what is around us at any given time.

Tips for approaching it:

1. Create a safe space where you feel comfortable and can practice in peace;
2. Watch videos of professionals and have fun imitating their movements. Dance is first and foremost fun, don't be afraid to make mistakes;
3. Don't be in a hurry. Observation takes time before you can turn it into artistic practice.

ACTIVITY 3- CIRCUS WITH MICA MARTUCCI



Mica Martucci is a circus performer and artisan. She contributed to the project by curating circus workshops for adults and children. Participants learned how to use everyday objects in an artistic way, as well as how to create their own bolas.

Here's how to make your own bolas:

1. Fill two balloons with flour and rice until they are heavy enough;
2. Close each balloon tightly with string, being careful not to leave any air inside. The twine should be at least as long as the arm of the person who will use the bolas

Mica's tips:

1. Interact with your object, learn to play with it using basic techniques and build your own relationship with it;
2. Observe the people around you and connect with them through your object;
3. Go with the flow and create with others a safe, non-performing space in which you can express yourself without fear;
4. Carve out a time for reflection and sharing of emotions after playing--circus can become a joyful way to bring people and differences together.

ACTIVITY 4 - PHYSICAL THEATRE BY LAURA FATINI



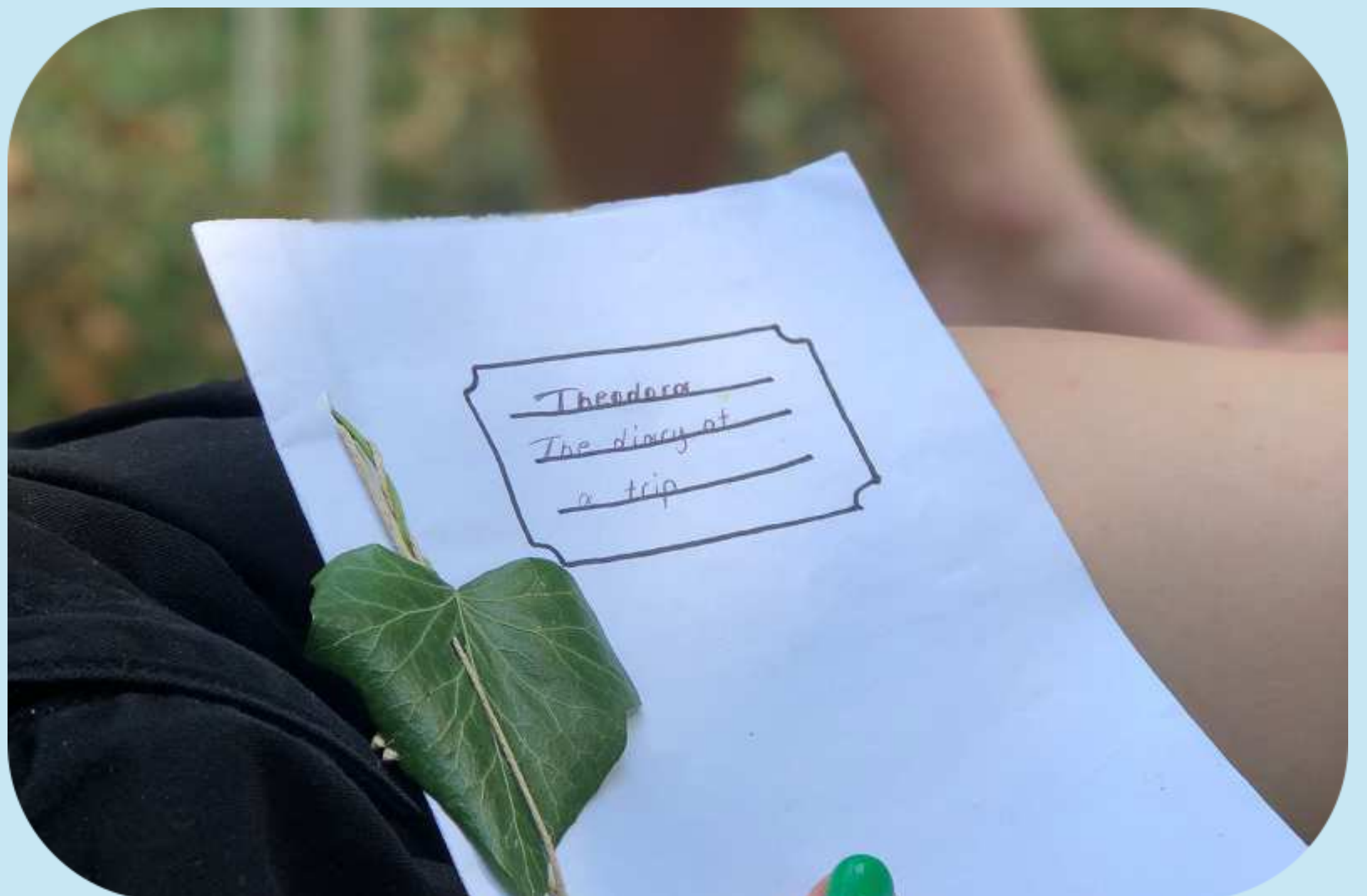
Laura Fatini is a theater artist and dancer. At the age of 20 discovered contact improvisation and realized that those slow, fluid movements could help anyone understand their bodies better. Our body speaks on our behalf, even before our mouth. It is essential for a performer- and in general for a person who works into and for a community- to understand what his/her body is saying to the world. Physical Theatre is a very powerful language which allows everyone to better understand its own body, its gestures, its language, and its relation with other bodies: it can be used as a tool to increase empathy and inclusiveness, in a very effective and quick way.

Laura Fatini's workshop:

"The workshop started with a relaxation session, and a warm up. Then I introduced some contact improvisation basics (body centering, floorwork, weight balancing experimentation). As soon as the participants became more confident with their movement we started to work in pairs, and then in groups, realizing contact improvisation jam sessions. We explored the possibility of being in contact without contact, experimenting with the energetic power of the skin, the gaze, the hand, and then of the whole body (mirror exercises, non verbal strategy exercises)."

ACTIVITY 5 - WRITING WORKSHOP

Francesco Pipparelli is a theater actor and screenplay writer. Benedetta Pisani is a Youth Worker with a passion for creative writing and peace



journalism. During the educator training in Torre Pellice, they held an introspective writing workshop to learn how to release the stream of consciousness.

Participants are seated comfortably with a notebook and a pen. There is soft music in the background, and the facilitator begins reading questions to shake the flow. For each question, three minutes to respond in written form.

Food for thought:

- What do I like about myself?
- When it comes to mentoring someone which behaviors would you like to instill or to avoid?
- You have to go on a long trip. What are you taking with you and what are you leaving behind? Why?

Tips to share with participants:

- Try not to filter the flow and write free of conditioning;
- Do not immediately read what you have written, but let a few days pass;
- Keep what you have written for yourself. The stream of consciousness can bring out desires, aspirations and aspects of our character that even we do not know consciously;
- Don't be afraid to write uncomfortable things. While writing, it is not uncommon to jot down things that under normal conditions we would never tell anyone.

ACTIVITY 6 - PARKOUR BY GEORGE CAPRARIU



"My assignment was to do some introductory parkour classes, since I've been a parkour practitioner for about 7 years, and I've taught people in Italy, in England, of all ages. I think it was an experience I won't forget because it is part of my life journey as a practitioner but also from a personal growth point of view."

What you need to approach parkour:

- an urban place where you can safely do your training
- comfortable clothes
- a bit of imagination

The training started on balance first, and then on various basic parkour techniques and group physical games, such as "the floor is lava" and many others, coming at the end of the classes with a mini performance created by the kids and led by George.

Parkour is also a philosophy

The concept of parkour is based on knowing yourself and trying to express yourself in an honest way, not being influenced by anybody but understanding how to move through the environment through your senses.

George and Zoe (see Activity 2) created a mixed choreography of Parkour and Free Dance, getting to mix these two disciplines and bringing them to the final choreography of the week in Bosnia.

AND IF I'M NOT AN ARTIST, CAN I STILL MAKE ART?

You don't have to be an artist to create something beautiful!



Bright colors, giant brushes, some latex gloves, lots of confidence in the creative process, and a strong team spirit.

These are the ingredients for making a collective mural!



PARTNERS

Centro Studi Sereno Regis (Italy)

Opera Circus (UK)

Schedia Stin Poli Kallitexniki Paidagogiki (Greece)

Vojvodjanski Gradjanski Centar (Serbia)

Genclik ve Degisim Dernegi (Turkey)

AL Teatro - Teatro do Arade, Associação Cultural (Portugal)

Carrigart Youth & Community Group (UK)

Dom kulture Bratunac (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Foreningen Beats Across Borders (Denmark)



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