

e INxactly THIS

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KUNSTVLAAI
FESTIVAL
OF INDEPENDENTS

Curatorial Statement

We are living through an inexact time – one that does not bring forth straightforward answers. While the impact of social resistances, right-wing governments and capitalist meltdown is apparent in the everyday, the long-term consequences are still to unfold. Can we form a bigger picture that marks this very particular, transitional period? Art is a mechanism to ‘make sense’ of the present, while also proposing possible futures through speculative thinking, gestural readings, and even provocations. Its hybridity of forms enables us to generate the bigger picture – one that is partial and subjective, yet addresses the common urgencies before us.

INexactly THIS, the 2012 edition of *Kunstvlaai: Festival of Independents* brings together some of the most significant and unique models of artist-run spaces, self-organized platforms as well as art schools from across The Netherlands and abroad. For over a decade, the festival has supported and propelled independent thinking as well as collaborative processes in the Dutch cultural scene. It continues to be a hosting platform for diverse structural positions and organizational attitudes that celebrate speculation, buoyancy, generous openness and mutual inspiration. Now framed as ‘Festival of Independents’, Kunstvlaai remains committed to showcasing a multitude of contemporary voices.

In Search of an Equation

As a festival, **INexactly THIS** positions itself amidst the dynamic characteristics of self-organized art initiatives and project structures. The curatorial model of this festival draws inspiration from the mathematical equation. We see ‘the equation’ as a collaborative entity, constructed from a set of inter-related elements. On a metaphorical level, the structure of the equation shares affinities with the functioning of independent arts initiatives

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– being a space for tryouts and estimation. The film, *Equation $X+X=0$* (1936) by mathematician and information scientist, Robert Fairthorne with filmmaker Brian Salt evokes collaboratory dynamics within the artistic sphere. It shows a kinetic diagram in which diverse forces come to be connected and continually effect one another, working together and apart, in and out of sync, physical yet somewhat ungraspable. Intangible forces such as co-creation, autonomy and cultural engagement thus, become perceptible.

Arriving at...THIS

The festival will take place at the end of November 2012 over a period of 9 days. As we are all aware, this will be a moment to face up to the challenges in a cultural environment that will have suffered massive cuts. As organizers, we find it crucial to address the future potential of autonomous practice, arts education and self-organization in the arts. The festival highlights new developments and perspectives brought by emerging as well as established practices. It is imagined as a collective moment to take stock of where we have arrived – the present therefore acts as a stage for imagined, enacted and subverted futures. **INexactly THIS** will have a heterogeneous programme composed through crossover collaborations between the curatorial team and participating initiatives. It will present contemporary (inter)-national tendencies and alliances operating as a site for horizontal exchange through discursive events, process-based presentations and on-site projects.

Starting this year, the festival will be nomadic as a response to the precarious economic and political climate, in which the notions of vacancy and gentrification have become more apparent than ever. **INexactly THIS** will take place at the Sint Nicolaas Lyceum in Amsterdam Zuid. As the school leaves to operate from a new building, our festival will ‘move in’ creating a temporary

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community. The complex is located at the cross-section of the old city and new urbane developments, surrounded by the lush Beatrix park and giant corporate buildings of the WTC complex. This site continues to hold a fresh memory of learning, collective experimentation and youthful energy. It is thus, also a place situated within a paradoxical setting. Through this magnificent glass building from the 1950s, the inside and outside become entangled – as we consciously respond to the surrounding context. The school premises will host a cinema, a bookshop, a podium, a workshop and a kitchen. These areas portray the vibrant range of activity carried out by participating organisations. Further, art schools along with smaller platforms will be provided classrooms to conceive presentations and special events. With additional outdoor projects the entire site will be activated as a cultural hub in Amsterdam.

Kunstvlaai: Festival of Independents privileges the values of artistic freedom, curiosity and the will to experiment. We propose to function as mediators that bring together disparate entities to activate a collectively produced equation arriving at a conglomerate THIS.

Natasha Ginwala & Fleur van Muiswinkel