



CIRCE (Cooperative for Information and Research of Circus Education)

Joint Staff Training exchange - Cirqueon (Prague) 14.02.18 - 21.02.18



1.- Participants

Antonia Smialek - Circus teacher (Cabuwazi, Berlin)

Gloria Guirao - Cultural Manager (Valencian Circus Association, Valencia)

Helina Griffiths - Circus artist and teacher (The Invisible Circus, Bristol)

Maria Georgopoulou - Circus teacher (Kids in Action, Thessaloniki)

Toon Heylen - Educational worker and circus teacher (Cirkus in Beweging, Leuven)



2.- Program

13.02 - arrival day

14.02 - Introduction to Cirqueon, discussion about the space and related issues with Katka Klusáková (our head teacher and space manager), meeting with Šárka (our director) about Cirkopolis festival and its organisation.

15.02 - Open training at Cirqueon, talk with Veronika (our research manager and editor) about the history of the contemporary circus in the Czech Republic, show at the Cirkopolis festival in the evening

16.02 - open training at Cirqueon, discussion with Isabel van Maele about prevention of burn out of circus teachers, show at the Cirkopolis festival in the evening.

17.02 - Creativity in teaching (focus on aerial) with Isabel van Maele, show at the Cirkopolis festival in the evening.

18.02 - Creativity in teaching (focus on aerial) with Isabel van Maele.

- 19.02 - Class visits and discussions with teachers from Cirqueon.
- 20.02 - Class visits and discussions with teachers from Cirqueon.
- 21.02 - Class visits and discussions with teachers from Cirqueon, Blind Circus class (students with visual impairment)
- 22.02 - Departure day.



3.- CIRQUEON

<http://www.cirqueon.cz/en>

Cirqueon is a contemporary circus centre funded in 2010.

CIRQUEON is an umbrella organization for the support and development of contemporary circus in the Czech Republic. Cirqueon is a member of the international [Circostrada Network](#).

3.1 Philosophy and main goals of the company

The main purpose of Cirqueon is to provide information on domestic and European events in the field of contemporary circus, to support contemporary circus projects created in the Czech Republic and to aid the development of circus skills of professionals and the general public.

Cirqueon together with Cirkus La Putyka are the most representative organizations of contemporary circus in Prague.

Cirqueons main objectives are social circus and a holistic approach to teaching.

A Lot of their focus is on giving back and building up the community, la putyka has more focus on business and on making artists there isn't much cohesion between the two. How important is it that circus companies work towards shared goals and work together as a community?

3.2 The space

400 m2, divided in different rooms.

- 3 rooms for train, creation and teaching,
- 1 teachers room.
- 1 storage room.
- 1 office room.

They started with only one space, but they always kept the idea of going further and get increased with more spaces if possible, opening borders, being estable but going ahead.



Management of the space:

- Residencies. Free for artists, except if it's a business performance with a lot of budget. They always try to help the artists and companies.
- Courses scheduled.
- Professional training. Free for artists



3.3 The regular classes

40 classes per week:

- Multi Circus for children and teenagers.
- Specific circus disciplines for adults



They are using the space to the maximum capacity. In a regular class for children the group consists of 2 teachers, 1 assistant and 15 children (normal ratio in Czech republic). An advantage of this is that each teacher and the assistant can concentrate on small groups of children to work with. Every kid can have a personal approach.

Skills lists for teachers so they be able to be multidisciplinary. The teachers also do regular assessments to show and share what they are learning on the skills list.

3.4 Finance of the project

- European projects.
- Municipality of Prague.
- Ministry of culture, Czech Republic.
- Regular courses.

They try to find the balance among the social activities and the commercial activities.

Analyse each case to be equitative and fair with everybody.

They give a subsidy to children from families with less economic possibilities.

4.- CIRKOPOLIS FESTIVAL

It's of about a small but at the same time, big among big circus festival!really good quality of show, creative and inspiring!

<http://www.cirkopolis.cz/program/?lang=en#>

4.1 General information

FEBRUARY 11-17TH 2018

FESTIVAL OF CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS IN PRAGUE

The festival is organized by Palac Akropolis together with CIRQUEON – the center for contemporary circus. This year was the 5th edition of the festival. Cirkopolis is a contemporary circus festival with elements of contemporary dance, physical, visual theater and contemporary music scene genres. The festival hosts several interesting and progressive foreign groups, workshops with foreign lecturers and other accompanying program.



4.2 The venues

PALAC ACROPOLIS - <http://www.palacakropolis.cz/>

Centre of independent culture offering unique music, theatre and arts. They organise support for experimental, nonverbal and physical theatre projects. They provide a scene for art groups with traditions in community theatre, social-criticism performance which focuses on current social issues. Starting from 2012, they are introducing contemporary circus. Together with the centre for new circus Cirqueon they organise the festival Cirkopolis, which connects the new circus with dance and physical theatre. Festival always invites several foreign groups and annually brings the world premiere of Cirkopolis.

PONEC - <http://www.divadloponec.cz/>

The dance venue – is an award-winning project by Tanec Praha, celebrated for its artistic use of the former Ponec cinema in 1998. The concept of this **first dance house** – or professional venue for contemporary dance in the Czech Republic – received support from the Žižkov town hall and a 25-year contract, under the condition that the reconstruction of the run-down building would be completed and financed within three years.

4.3 The publicity

Publicity was made more than enough by the organizers of the event (on fb, internet on the whole, metro stations etc)

Small community attended the festival though. More, the people that are really interested in the festival and its topics. The festival addresses to all ages, this is why even small children were watching! Year by year the organization is getting bigger and bigger, so does the festival.

People mainly from the family of circus such as students, teachers, admirers of the show and the work being made came to watch the spectacles (they were fantastic and inspiring)!

4.4 Performances

We had the chance to see several shows during the festival:

- **Miettes**, a man cutting over and over the wire he is balancing on!
- **Mistake** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZayGM1xbyJw> how many mistakes can be done at a play?
- **3D** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fi_1sNLjNBM, three kinds of art coming harmonically together, dance music and circus
- **As heavy as it goes** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ss9a-agd8Ag>, everyday we carry many “weights” on us, this is another kind of one!
- **Circus Battle**, you cannot imagine the end of the battle!

5.- WORKSHOP “Creativity in teaching. Focus on Aerial” with Isabel Van Maele.

- We learned about teaching objectives.
- How bringing creativity and play to your classes empowers the students to learn.
- Allowing students to learn through play and exploration means that they learn better, really understand how things work and that they aren't being spoon fed as much and means the teacher isn't becoming so tired.
- The teacher is there to facilitate learning, not only to teach tricks tricks tricks.
- Inventing aerial games using board games and using the four teaching objectives to give clear learning outcomes for the games.
- This brings creativity, play and personal empowerment to learning experiences.



Four teaching methods

Imitate
Repeat
Experiment
Understand

Four teaching objectives

Creative behaviour
Team building/working together
Getting ready
Training/getting better/skills

Cirqueon class rules

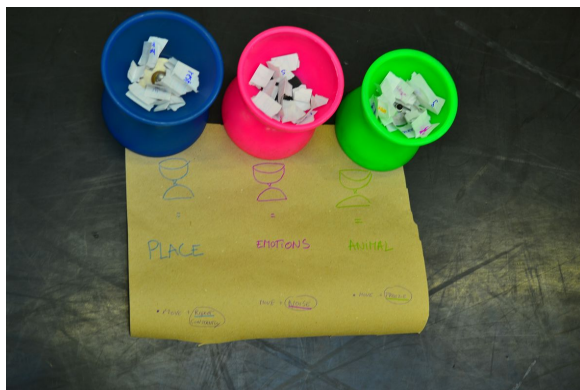
Respect

Awareness

Team spirit

Code:

- To focus often.
- Finding a solution to problems together and if it doesn't work then rock paper scissors.



6. LEARNING FROM EACH OTHERS ORGANIZATIONS: Positives aspects of the JST exchange.

- Use the free time during the JST!
-> it's up to the participants to develop their own needs, exchange working-live-experiences and discuss about the projects etc. it's so precious to have plenty of time for interchanging practical information, game ideas, existing problems...
- Good to have informal meeting!
-> safe atmosphere, more confident feeling, more empowerment, more possibilities of taking the initiative
- No leader in the exchange!
-> it's nice to share responsibilities/tasks during the stay...everyone can find a role to support the group
- Get to know each others workinglive and the structure of their organisations
-> realizing the differences and open the mind for other ways of managing a circus space or circus classes

- We had some good discussions and brainstorming sessions!
-> social circus is a rich way to learn from each other, in adult education, team building etc.
- Networking!
-> getting to know everyone really well in an intimate setting permits more space for sharing



After the JST exchange the group has built confidence in a short amount of time and can start a closer and safe networking, because we have more references about other circus schools, the activities they develop and the methods they use.



7.- FEEDBACK TO CIRQUEON

- Library: They have a big and developed library for research.
- Fantastic place: They rooms for training are perfect for doing different activities at the same time because they are separated.
- Good work in teaching and pedagogy development about circus education.
- Open minded people with interest in reflection and evaluation.
- Group of teachers as a core, working together to the same direction and improving their own methods.
- Adults helping teenagers to become new generation of circus staff, teachers or performers. Involving teenagers in the activities of the association. Emergent artists.
- Great research about contemporary circus in czech republic. Transition from huge theater culture and classic circus to new circus. Crosspollination.

