

Residency for the People  
Diary

May 1, 2021

Editing the Open Call for François, I some-silly-how hashed up his name from Chambard to *Marchand*. A salesman. Perhaps this is a subconscious response to François' earlier remarks that, coming from New York, he doesn't quite grasp the system of grants that keeps Dutch designers afloat. "I'm used to finding clients, not subsidies. And I'm perfectly fine doing the same thing here." I suddenly realise that, only yesterday, he brought up corporate sponsoring.

The subconscious reasoning that lead to this 'mistake' doesn't surprise me. Because of my professional habit of interpreting art, I'm quite aware of the constant psychological process of connecting bits and pieces of information from various parts of the brain to create possibly coherent stories. Words, experiences, emotions, cultural references, impressions, they are somehow all 'sensed' or 'called upon' to respond to a certain 'question', 'request' or 'demand' that originates from my interaction with, or rather presence within, the world. This process is constantly active when I'm awake, it functions in dreams, and the very largest part of it never reaches consciousness. For my writing, I 'listen in' to this process, inviting it to 'surface' while I experience or contemplate a work of art, an exhibition, a design project, a performance, etc. It can happen simultaneously with the experience, it can take place afterwards, or in anticipation. Writing often reinforces and narrows down the process of association – call it concentration – to a specific field of interpretation, which then starts to widen again. Writing creates a point of convergence, attracting information from all over the inarticulate brain like the opening in a pinhole camera. From there it diverges again in conscious images or words to add to an increasingly rich, complex, layered picture, or story – which can be written out. It reminds me of earlier accounts of how seeing takes place: the idea of the eyes sending rays of light into the world to see, the emission theory of vision that was generally held in ancient Greece. You need to have some sense of what it is you're looking for, there must be some sort of 'open call'...

Although I am not a fan of computer analogies, it's a lot like an internet search: you send a query to the search engine, that almost immediately returns tens, hundreds, even thousands of possible hits, giving some results pre-eminence over others, based on complex calculations and – depending on the search engine and the settings you're using – previous online behaviour. In the brain, that would be a process located in the hippocampus. So, my theory is that the hippocampus is not active on demand *only*, but is constantly sending out queries to different parts of the brain to connect experience to memory, receiving innumerable signals in return at any time, but discarding, ignoring or suppressing most of them, or making use of them at a level where I don't realise how much is actually happening. (To me, this is what the early Heidegger is on about.) The hippocampus is also active in generating a coherent story from the information it retrieves. Not an ordered list, like a

search engine would do, but a more movie-like experience. During sleep, something interesting happens to dreams. I wouldn't be able to tell this from experience, but research shows that dreams become less coherent as the sleep period lasts longer. This might be explained by an increase of cortisol, which disconnects the communication between neo-cortex (where the memories are stored) and hippocampus (that would organise the information into a coherent story), making dreams in the morning much more incoherent than dreams early in the night.

May 2, 2021

It takes me ages to create a logo and rewrite the Open Call for the *Home is where the ♥ is* residency. How did Illustrator work again? And what can I possibly tell people to persuade them to come up with a proposal?

I'm not participating in the selection for the Storioni Festival residency. There were no more applications since we met on Friday and the committee is well-staffed already. Wim, as the first resident with the Ridgecrest project; Niels, who participated in the Quarantine Sessions with the skateboard project; and Teresa, also part of the Quarantine Sessions with the Sengersbroek project. Then there's Wouter, Mark and Bart of the Storioni Trio, and Frank of Muziekgebouw Eindhoven. I think Lucas and Jip will be there, maybe François too.

May 3, 2021

Lucas shares his design for the *Post-Corona Sessions* logo, where the window becomes a facemask. It's nice, the timing is right, with vaccinations underway and measures becoming less severe. The title exudes optimism but the mask is still 'standing' - it's not lying on the floor or flying through the air, discarded after use. At the same time, I notice how the window easily becomes a symbol for being 'behind bars'. François' logo is suggesting this, with the bars being loosened and tossed aside; the mask in Lucas' logo has similar associations and even my logo hints that Earth is our one and only home, which we cannot simply leave or escape if we wanted to. It will be interesting to see how this symbolism evolves over time.

When I look at François' logo from a distance, the blue bars turn the window into a set of blocks as well, that are coming loose. I even discern stick figures – people playing with the blocks.

May 4, 2021

Translating the open calls, preparing them for publication on the website. Practical things. Contact info, proper links. Everything is ready, we're just waiting for OOK to give their okay to the draft of François' open call.

May 5, 2021

Everything is finally online. OOK put the open call on their Facebook page, so I guess they're alright with it. Sense of anticipation. I forward the open call to several people. Marianne's sister-in-law has been working at ASML for over ten years, she might know someone there who would be interested in the neurodiversity design workshop. And some time ago, my son Nagib told me about a friend who wanted to develop from graphic design to branding. "He's just not sure how to go about it, how to build a portfolio or find clients." "What do you think?" I said, "Would Christian be interested in doing a residency? Maybe he could design our homepage?"

May 7, 2021

Christian actually responds to the open call. He would love to discuss the details with us.

May 10, 2021

Lucas calls me in the morning to tell me there will be a photographer over at the bar today to portrait the team for Eindhovens Dagblad. "It's for an article this Wednesday. They're coming at one o'clock. I know it's a bit late... I don't know if you would like to be there too..." "Well, I'm part of the team, right? I'll come over." "That would be nice. François is there, Jip, Luca, so we might as well have a meeting afterwards." "That would be good. See you at one!"

I arrive at the station in time to catch the intercity train, except it isn't running. Some problem with a switch. No idea if the regional train will run. I call Lucas to let him know I'll be late. "I'll take the next available train anyway. So we can at least have a meeting." It feels weird. When the regional train finally arrives, I get onboard with dark thoughts clouding my mind. It's not about being in the paper, it's about being in a team. It simply doesn't come easy to me, no matter if the other members are nice, it's just... I think of the school yard, how I never understood what all the fuss was about, how the rules eluded me. The bullying, the loneliness. It never goes away, not really. There's a lingering sense of vulnerability that easily turns into anger, indignation. Anyway, that's something I have to deal with. To distract my mind I turn to Kant, well, *A Very Short Introduction* to Kant, "whose name, properly pronounced, amounts to an obscenity in English".

Luca J. opens the door at the bar, he's a darling, making me a coffee, pointing to the brass shelf behind the bar for bottles and glasses. "I've been polishing for hours!" "It looks wonderful," I say, "now it's a proper bar." The photographer was there only briefly, and Lucas and Jip are out with Luca, the girl who was selected for the Storioni residency last Sunday. They're visiting the Muziekgebouw. François returns from some errand and asks if I've had lunch. "No, not yet." Somehow this complicates things for him – he's hungry and there isn't all that much to eat. "Never mind François, I can go out and get a sandwich or something." Then he starts to take out bread, ham, pâté, some cheese... what more would you need? I sense a cultural difference here, or perhaps just personal habits. "Oh, and look," I say, "there's honey too!"

While we eat, François talks about his experience in New York, working for a big brand design agency, as the assistant of the director, a designer who had his heydays in the sixties and seventies. "I basically was his bitch for two years. A lot of long hours, all-nighters. He would call at two in the morning to tell me he had some ideas, and I would get up, grab a cab and go see him. Or he would pass by, sketch a few things, 'it should be like this, and this, and that; I need a full presentation in two days'. This was a guy who was drinking cocktails for lunch, he would be mildly drunk throughout the afternoon. I made a lot of presentations! And we weren't using computers yet, presentations were made on boards, cutting and pasting illustrations and texts. For a big campaign you would have a stack of dozens of these foam boards. Or we'd use slides – you know, diapositives." "Yeah, I remember," I say, "I used them for my work as a photographer." My thoughts drift off. Before digital, I shot diapositive film in Sudan... How different our life-experiences have been. Writing about the all-pervading poverty of a civil war zone versus the 'glamour' of international branding for companies like T-Mobile or Motorola. Luca J. wonders if the crazy hours and the cocktails were typical for the design scene in New York. "It was the nineties. It's long ago. For that specific period of time, in a certain segment of the design world, this was normal." "But you worked in agencies like this for years, right?" I ask. "Why did you put up with it?" "It was the way things were. I thought that to make it in the industry, this is what you did. I learned a lot, and the salary was good... it was the only period in my life that I actually made some money. It took me until well in my thirties before I could let go of the expectations of the higher middle class environment I grew up in. The big houses, the nice cars."

Lucas and Jip return, with Luca. I'm sitting around a corner, so I only get a glimpse of her face, hidden behind a curtain of long blonde hair. "Maybe you should just go home now," Lucas says, "and listen to some of that music. I can send you the poster with the names of all the performers, so you can look them up on Spotify or something." It's interesting to watch his body language, there's a certain clumsiness. Luca isn't saying much herself – which might explain why Lucas seems slightly uncertain. She says goodbye and leaves. The visit to the Muziekgebouw had been interesting enough, except that the one space Luca had really wanted to see was being used for rehearsals – they were not allowed inside. "The man who showed us the building was kind, and very cultured," says Lucas, "but he didn't quite get it. At some point he was asking Luca about her background. 'Are you an art student, or a designer?' he said. The girl's thirteen!" Bringing these worlds together isn't all that easy.

“Luca is very down to earth, and she seems to know exactly what she wants to do,” Jip says. “When we’re making suggestions, she’s more like ‘I’ve got this’. It’s nice.” “And what is her project going to look like?” I ask. “We went to the Muziekgebouw and she’s going to listen to some of the music they will be playing at the Storioni Festival, for inspiration,” says Lucas. “She’ll design one or more suits, that would be displayed in a central area in the building. We’re still looking for the best way to make the patterns and sew the suits.” “So no one will wear them?” “Right now, she doesn’t find that important, but we’ll see what happens. It would be great if the Storioni Trio could wear her suits...”

Alice joins us, Lucas’ intern. She recalls that we met the other day in the garden. “You were wearing your pink shoes and matching pink T-shirt.” I suddenly remember I wanted to know about the selection: “How did it go?” “It was fine,” Lucas says. “Some people were a bit disappointed that there were only two applications to choose from,” Jip adds. This brings us to publicity for the upcoming residencies. There will be a story in the paper this Wednesday. “Who’s writing it?” I ask. “Rob Schoonen,” says Lucas. “In that case, I wonder what he will find to criticise. I suspect that is his fundamental understanding of art journalism: always be critical.” “During the interview he did ‘play the devil’s advocate’...” Oh well, we’ll see. Hopefully, the article will generate more response. Jip quickly looks at the Instagram account: “There are twenty likes for the Unblock Workshop, twelve for the Post-Corona Sessions, and eighteen for Home is where the heart is.” “That’s not bad at all,” I say. “People actually like it... Did you have any reactions to your open call Lucas?” “No, I haven’t installed the account yet.” “No phone calls? Your number is in the call too...” But no. “Let’s talk about the poster board,” Lucas says. “We got a large wooden frame, big enough to display three Abri-size posters. We just need to get some posts to put it up,” says Lucas. “How much is Abri-size?” Alice asks. “Is that like A0?” “No, it’s nearly twice that size,” “Ah, so it’s A minus 1,” François says. He is happy to go out tomorrow morning to get some construction materials. “Perhaps we can finish it before the end of the day.” I’m looking at him. “A minus 1?” “It just seemed logical,” he says, and we are giggling about his salesmanship like kids in the back of the classroom. “I’m trained to sell anything.” Meanwhile, Jip has brought some pre-printed ad cards from Albert Heijn, to put up announcements on the supermarket bulletin board. “We should have some short texts for them,” she says. “Maybe Nanne can do that, with his text-writing skills?” Lucas says. “Sure, I’ll give it a try.” “Maybe it could just be like ‘hey, do you want to make 350 euros? Go to [residencyforthepeople.com](http://residencyforthepeople.com)’ – that would be fine with me.”

Lucas and Jip are off to the Peace Centre to talk about a possible collaboration. Meanwhile, François and I discuss the website. “Perhaps you can make the titles of the open call documents a bit shorter, so I don’t have to send people these long unintelligible links with all the weird numbers?” he says. “Good point. I didn’t really give it much thought...” It reminds me of how I used to prepare special links sheets at MU with all online resources, renaming the untidy links to a neat list of simple references like ‘the press statement in Dutch’, ‘the Facebook announcement’ and ‘the photo sheet in PDF’. Not going to do that now, but it can’t hurt to adjust the names of the files. François brings up a more important issue though: “I’d like to talk about the diary with you.” “Sure.” “I really love the idea, but I wonder how

we can make sure that everyone's work gets recognised. For example, I've been doing a lot of decorating here at the bar, but who will know about it? My friends are wondering what I am doing here, and when they read the diaries, it's just full of these conversations..." That is... Right... Until now, I didn't fully realise that people might actually read the diaries. "It's true of course," I say, "we've been talking a lot. But I expect to be writing more about practical things now that we're starting with the actual residencies. The thing is: I can't be everywhere at once. When I proposed the diary as a format, I said it should be open to all of us to contribute. Not everyone likes to write, I get that, but you could also just tell me what happened, so I can include it in my entries." "It's about recognition, mostly," François says. "I'm doing a lot of work for free right now, we all are, as an investment in the future of the residency. But it would be really nice if that is documented somehow." "You're absolutely right. I did notice how much better the bar looked, but I never mention it in the diary. I'll fix it, no problem."

Jip and Lucas return from their meeting with Hans, Hans and Hans of the Peace Centre Foundation. "It's true, they are all called Hans!" says Jip. "One of them actually looks like a peace activist, with a long beard and a large earring in the shape of the peace symbol!" The Peace Centre organises symposia and debates, publishes a magazine, and works to realise a 'peace path' (vredespad) in the Arboretum of the Meerlandpark. The focus is on how science and technology can contribute to a safe, just and sustainable global society. We are in Eindhoven, after all. Hans, Hans and Hans would certainly be interested in some form of collaboration. Perhaps they could organise a *Peace for the People* residency?

Lovely call with Christian, my son's graphic designer friend, about the *Home is where the ♥ is* residency. "So if I understand it correctly," he recapitulates my explanation of RftP, "you want to encourage people to realise plans that are important to them? And you are paying them to do it?" "Yes, that's it." "I think that's really cool. It's something I really want to do myself: to inspire people." "I think you are exactly the kind of person we are looking for with this open call... Is there anything else you would like to know about the residency or the programme?" "Well... it is a design project, or an art project, but when it comes to communication, I don't see much difference with corporate branding. You still need to define your core values, translate them into a clear and consistent message, and get it out into the world. So I would love to discuss that with you guys, and take that as the basis for my proposal." "Perhaps this right here is your proposal: to approach our online home this way. I don't know how many people will respond to the open call, and a committee will eventually select one applicant, so it's a bit early to come up with a detailed plan. Maybe, instead, you could just say you want to sit with us to discuss the core values, and how to translate them into a recognisable online presence." "I'm also thinking about the entire identity, you know. Fonts, logo, stationary..." "Well, why not? We have a logo, but it would be good to talk about the way we best use it. Make that part of your application too, I like the idea a lot." He's really a nice guy, I sort of understand why he and my son are friends. "I'd be happy to do something for Nagib's father," he says. That makes me laugh. "You're too kind Chris. For us, what matters is that you get a chance to do something meaningful, that has some impact. Who knows, maybe it's useful for you to work with a bunch of experienced

designers, see how they approach things. Anyway, it should be fun too.” “I think that won’t be a problem,” he says. “I know what to do, you can expect my application in a couple of days.”

May 11, 2021

I’m having another look at Christian’s website, checking the ‘about me’ section. Some of the stuff he’s writing there is really touching. “As a designer, I give meaning to my own life and that of other people. Because each client has their own story, the work always remains interesting.” There’s no irony, no wink to a cynical audience. “A starry sky and ancient Egypt, two of my main sources of inspiration. Boundlessness is the starting point in all my projects.” And the part that really gets me: “In the future I want to focus on several projects to inspire people and to motivate them to take action. I want to share my life experience in a playful way, through music, books or coaching.” It’s the intention that counts. It usually takes a lot of living before you have some experience worth sharing, but this aspiration can last a lifetime, it can still be valid in ten, twenty, thirty years. One day, Chris might find himself composing songs, writing a book or coaching students. “Chocolate milk. Every successful project starts with my favourite drink.” I truly hope he will get the residency.

From an email from François:

*Today I started very early to organise and plan the billboard. Luca, this cool helper, and I went to a material warehouse where we managed to find half salvaged supplies and half new supplies to build the giant billboard which will not compare unfavourably with the ones you see on the sides of American highways. Construction has started later today and will hopefully be completed tomorrow.*

*Yes, it’s correct that I made the blue mirror. I had bought this super cool material two years ago and had it in my bedroom. One day, I brought it downstairs for a quick photoshoot and everybody loved it, especially Lucas. So I made this nice wooden frame and hung it. I think it looks wonderful with everything else and is a nice complement to the red train doors that were just installed by that nice guy Frank, a friend of Lucas. I am sure the blue mirror will be the object of many Instagram moments, like many other corners in the bar.*

*Yesterday, we had an amazing conversation with Hilde Bouchez. Hilde is the head of the school of design at Kask in Ghent. She is also an anthropologist, researcher and design historian. Two or three years ago she wrote “A Wild Thing” an incredible book about the invisible side of design and the spirit of objects. The title comes from the observation that, too often, objects are treated like tamed, domesticated animals, while objects can shine from within, like wild animals. It is a beautiful (smallish) book, easy and instructive to read and also a beautiful and simple object itself. I was really inspired and contacted her out of the blue. She invited me to come to Ghent for a conversation, it was a wonderful time. I was presenting my student and thesis work first. She was positive but then I started to speak about my project of a neurodiversity design house. This was over two years ago. At the time*

*the idea was burgeoning. That is what has now become my part of the Residency for the People. Hilde was excited, much more than she was interested in my student work. She gave me the ultimate compliment, saying that the project was a 'Wild Thing'. In her vocabulary this defines a project that is taking a totally different spin on design, that is liberating design from its tamed, captive position and making it an object of liberation, emancipation, 'wildness'. Wow. I was struck. She gave me the courage to dig a little further. She is one of the reasons I am here today.*

*Of course she first crossed my mind when time came to invite people/women as board members. She was immediately receptive. Yesterday she formally accepted. She will play the role of an advisor or ally, less of a formal administrative board member. She told us the Residency for the People was so unusual and powerful that she had no hesitation. She spontaneously offered to come in June to attend one of the sessions of the Unblock workshop! Hilde is very familiar with Lucas' work and a big fan too. She uses some of his projects as examples for her lectures and presentations. At the end of the conversation she invited Lucas and me to be chairs for the Marteen Van Severen project happening every year in April. That is a great honour and so cool. Lucas and I will have to co-present a vision of design and that will probably be the first time we do that.*

*Last thing about Hilde. She is also starting residency programs. One for graduating students of KASK so they can easily transition into the 'real' world. And one in Egypt, selecting one family at a time to work on design and craft projects so they can find a way to sustain themselves.*

In the evening, Christian sends in his application, a ten-page pdf file.

May 12, 2021

I'm about to leave home for a photoshoot in Eindhoven when Lucas calls about the billboard posters, or actually about the logos we made for the open call. He thought the logos should be more homogeneous and shouldn't contain any photographs – like mine does. He has sent me a proposal for the billboard. "Did you receive it?" "Yes, I've got it." "Are you looking at it?" He redesigned my logo, replacing the original image of the Earth with a large heart. "Do you mind if we change your logo into this version?" "Yes, I do actually. It feels as if you are turning this into a design thing, making it look all sleek and professional, without discussing it." "What do you mean, I'm asking you now, aren't I?" My heart is racing. "No, the original idea was that we would all adapt the basic logo in our own way, expressing individual differences. It didn't have to be well-designed. What happens now is that you feel that it doesn't really look good that way, and make up new rules. Instead of asking me if I agree with the rules, you change my logo, and ask me if I have a problem with that. Suddenly, it's not about the basic ideas of the Residency, but about how much this logo matters to me. But that's beside the point. What matters is that the Residency for the People is open for everyone, that everyone can be creative. You don't need to be a designer." "You're right,"

Lucas said, "I shouldn't have changed it just like that." "You know, I'm all in favour of some uniformity. Align the different variations, keep them the same size. And I don't give a toss for having a photograph of the Earth, we can substitute it with a more graphic drawing for all I care." "No, it's good feedback. We'll leave the logo as it is, and discuss it later."

It shouldn't upset me, but it does. I need to clear my head to drive to Eindhoven safely. The roads are busy, I'm tense, wondering how to handle this kind of situations, that seems to demand that I draw boundaries, guard certain principles. "It just comes with the process," Marianne says. "You need to accept that." I think about my driving lessons, how it took me nearly two years to finally get my license, two months before my fifty-first birthday. "It's not about knowing how to drive," my instructor told me: "it's about anticipating all the reckless things other people do." There must be a life-lesson in there, somewhere. I have to change lanes, put on the signal and gently start moving to the right, where another driver gets a serious scare and uses their claxon to warn me off.

The article in Eindhovens Dagblad is online. Inge, whom I worked with at TAC years ago, sends me a link, which is nice – people do see it. Not sure if the story about the residency will make much sense to everyone, but at least it isn't critical. It's not entirely accurate either, but the photograph is nice.

There's also an application for the Post Corona Sessions. [...] would like to develop a concept where feelings/conversations create a playlist or a sort of life soundtrack, combining time and visual art with music. I like the idea, and there are some heartfelt observations in the letter about genuine experience being hijacked by the social media influencer craze:

*I grew up with skateboarding and the world-wide culture that came with it. I got to see a big part of Europe and connected with so many like-minded people and other cultures, not knowing that roughly 10 years later everything (literally) would get labelled by society and people telling you this is 'this' and that is 'that'. From music, food to fashion and even politics, the word: 'influencer' just gives me the creeps. What used to be people just 'doing their thing' and earning admiration for being true to themselves, turned into this monster of greed.*

Of course, it makes me think of Debord's *Society of the Spectacle*. Present-day skateparks with their subsidies, maintenance, rules of conduct, oversight, etc. are obviously part of the spectacle, but how about the scene in the streets? The difficult question, to me anyway, is whether the experience of travel and meeting other people through a shared passion for skateboarding is original, genuine if you like, or a translation of the romantic image of the counter-culture into a different form. If there was a 'world-wide culture' ten or twenty years ago, it's hard to imagine how skateboarding wasn't be part of the spectacle already. It would be interesting to look at the influence of branding on the culture. Sneaker company Vans, for instance, was a big brand before [...] was even born. After a successful run, the company filed for bankruptcy in 1984 and was later sold to a banking firm. Since then, Vans has been sold and bought several more times while it grew into a multi-billion-dollar business. As to influencers: Vans founder Paul van Doren paid professional skaters Stacy Peralta and Tony

Alva to wear his shoes in the 1960s, and the brand had a big boost when Sean Penn wore a pair of checker-board slip-ons in the 1982 movie *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*. A 2009 article in the LA Times says: *Vans has collaborated with an astonishingly wide range of taste makers from the worlds of action sports (Alva, Rowley, Steve Caballero), fashion (Marc Jacobs, Trovata), music (KISS, Iron Maiden, No Doubt), art (Mister Cartoon, Neckface) and beyond.* This is still during the ‘pre-influencer’ era [...] discerns. But how about skateboarding itself? To what extent has the skater’s experience been shaped by industries?

A Wikipedia article about skateboarding offers some interesting details: *By the 1960s a small number of surfing manufacturers in Southern California such as Jack's, Kips', Hobie, Bing's and Makaha started building skateboards that resembled small surfboards, and assembled teams to promote their products. [...] Some of these same teams of skateboarders were also featured on a television show called "Surf's Up" in 1964, hosted by Stan Richards, that helped promote skateboarding as something new and fun to do. [...] Skateboarding was popularized by the 1986 skateboarding cult classic Thrashin'. Directed by David Winters and starring Josh Brolin, it features appearances from many famous skaters such as Tony Alva, Tony Hawk, Christian Hosoi and Steve Caballero. Thrashin' also had a direct impact on Lords of Dogtown. [...] These films have helped improve the reputation of skateboarding youth, depicting individuals of this subculture as having a positive outlook on life, prone to poking harmless fun at each other, and engaging in healthy sportsman's competition. According to the film, lack of respect, egotism and hostility towards fellow skateboarders is generally frowned upon, albeit each of the characters (and as such, proxies of the "stereotypical" skateboarder) have a firm disrespect for authority and for rules in general. [...] The classic film short Video Days (1991) portrayed skateboarders as reckless rebels.*

I remember seeing parts of Larry Clark’s *Kids*, from 1995. Today it is seen as a movie that heavily influenced the image of skateboarding. Asked about the popularity of the film twenty years on, one of the lead actors in the film, Leo Fitzpatrick (who played Telly), says: “I have no fucking idea, man. I haven’t seen it in 20 years, but I would imagine that it’s just [...] that freedom that you have as a teenager. The idea of running around with your crew and kind of creating your own fun even if you don’t have much money, and sort of not knowing where the day is going to take you and not having an agenda or responsibilities. More things happen to you in your teenage years than will happen to you in the rest of your life. There’s more firsts: the first time you drink, the first time you smoke weed, the first time you have sex—those are all firsts. Once those are gone, they’re gone. I just think the idea of being a teenager and discovering things is kind of what people can maybe relate to.”

Teenagers do have an overwhelming sense of living a genuine life – as opposed to the phony world of ‘adult’ society (where on Earth is my copy of *Cather in the Rye*?) – they just don’t know how scripted many of their experiences are. Back then, the influencers weren’t on Instagram yet, but the skateboard culture was pretty heavily medialised all the same. Another lead actor from *Kids*, Carisa Barah (who played Joy), contributes her own interesting memories. Talking about the scene back then, she says: “I was kind of a late bloomer— everyone was having sex and doing all of these things, but I was very naive. There was an

innocence and a lawlessness—that’s how we were all behaving. I’m really grateful that I grew up exactly when I did, because it’s not that way anymore. There’s no more innocence. There’s no more disconnection. There’s no more grit. Everything has to be so polished. It was really nice.”

Beyond this question whether the scene was scripted or not, I try to understand the further implications. A group of kids spending much of their time out in the streets, not really knowing what else to do with themselves. In some ways, they are part of the consumer society: with what little money they have, they buy boards, shoes, trousers, shirts, zines, dope, booze. There’s an *expectation* that life should be exciting or fun, they’re going to be professional skateboarders or in some other way do great things with their lives. But it isn’t happening *yet*. Well, for the teens starring in *Kids*, it *was* happening of course... Larry Clark was one of the few people who took them seriously, didn’t want to chase them from the park or the pool or – he put them in front of a camera to tell a shocking cautionary tale about HIV. But would their lives have been ‘spectacular’ before Clark came along? I think the answer is no. They weren’t trying to document their own every move, had no video camera’s yet, no phones. Perhaps someone took some snapshots. Roaming the streets, appropriating the sidewalks, the pools, the parks – there is no real purpose, just to do that one trick perfectly. Too bad I never owned a skateboard. And lived in a forest.

May 13, 2021

Before calling Luca about her plans for the Storioni residency, I go through her application email. She writes that her mom, Jess Oberlin, showed her the open call. Luca always has a lot of ideas for projects she would like to realise. She takes her inspiration from other cultures and tv shows she’s watching. She loves drawing characters and has been making fashion ever since she was little. “I’m much better at fashion than my mom (jk/hj).” That puzzles me; *jk* is probably ‘just kidding’, but what is *hj*, or */hj*? I try to look it up, but no... this particular bit of text language refuses to yield its secrets. Luca’s proposal is to copy a dress from a tv show: *Star vs the forces of evil*. “But it might just as well be something else.” Wonderful mail: brief, to the point, open-ended, clever. On the phone, she answers my questions pretty much the way she writes. “How did you like the Muziekgebouw?” “It was nice.” “I heard from Lucas that you are listening to the music that will be performed during the Storioni Festival. Do you have a favourite piece?” “Uuumh, yes, I like Prokofiev, his second string quartet.” “The idea was to let yourself get inspired to design a pattern, right?” “Yes, but I haven’t started designing yet.” In the background, questions come up, are rejected, rephrased – *must not talk down, must not direct the answer, must not...* “Is that something you did before – do you have some kind of method to turn music into a design?” “No, I just listen en see what happens next.” “And what’s the next step?” “On Tuesday, we’re going to silk-screen the pattern on fabric, and then I’ll make a garment or garments out of it.” “So, how much fabric will you print?” “It will depend on how much I need, I guess, but I don’t know that yet.” “Fair enough. I’m very curious to see the results... Oh, there’s something else I meant to ask you about! In your mail, you used these abbreviations – you wrote that you

were better at fashion than your mom, followed by *jk/hj*. Can you explain to me what it stands for?” “They are tone indicators, usually a slash-forward followed by one or more letters, and you use them in text messages to let someone know how a remark should be understood.” “I sort of guessed *jk* would be just kidding, but what about the rest?” “Like the */j* is for joking – what was it again I wrote?” “*hj*...” “Right, so that’s half joking.” “Ah, I get it. Tone indicators... Never too old to learn, they say.” I thank her for the conversation and start writing a story for the poster board. I’m still smiling when I send it to Lucas and François.

Looking for a list of tone indicators, I come across a very informative [New York Times article](#) that includes a series of video clips with Lorelei Ramirez demonstrating how to convey the different tones. “Get these chips away from me! */r*.” She’s good. The story is good too, it gives some interesting background, and links the indicators to neurodiversity. Although many people find them useful, there are drawbacks. “The growing lexicon of tone indicators, beyond helping people understand what’s sincere or what’s flirty, can feel, to the uninitiated, like another language. And at their most complex, tone indicators may veer into the patronizing.” Or, as one quoted tweet says: *“tone indicators can be useful for people on the spectrum who still have trouble discerning sarcasm and intent via text”* and *“stop making 74928483 useless indicators, people with autism aren’t brainless infants”* can be two coexisting statements.

Good news from Lonny: Atelier NL’s application for SnelGeld has been approved. The project to make coffee cups for the bar with the neighbourhood can go ahead.

May 16, 2021

I keep checking the mail to see if any more open calls have come in. Today, there’s a candidate for the Unblock workshop. And Luca J. would like to participate as well. The deadline is tomorrow...

May 17, 2021

There’s a mail from Maarten, who received our open call through Marianne’s sister-in-law. He’s the founder of the ASML Autism Ambassy, that now exists of twelve ambassadors, and would like to know more about Residency for the People. I immediately call François, all excited: this is just the kind of thing I was hoping might happen. He’s happy too, but he has some rather bad news: one of Lucas’ sons tested positive for corona, so Lucas has to self-quarantine. The thing is, that François had dinner with them yesterday, so he can’t go to OOK tomorrow for the selection. Perhaps I should go with Jip, and then he can join us online? Anyway, it would probably not take all that long, because there were only two or three candidates. Luca J. applied, and Stijn, whom Lucas had told me about before – he makes this remarkable fuse boxes and lamps and other technical things from wood.

May 18, 2021

Just as I'm getting ready to go to Eindhoven, Jip calls me. She didn't know I already heard about Lucas' son from François. "We thought it would be better to do the selection online," she says. "Oh, I had actually planned to come to Eindhoven, to see how Luca is printing the fabrics." "Well, we're not printing today, I'm taking her to the drapery shop." "Alright, I get it, it's impractical to go to OOK in person – let's do it online." "Great, I'll set up a zoom meeting." "Okay, see you in a bit!"

François and Jip are there, and Inge, of Stichting OOK. She has some very disappointing news: none of their clients had applied for the workshop. It's not just that this means there are few participants... "For us, it poses a real problem for the involvement of our guides," Inge says, "because we can't bill the hours when there are no OOK clients in the workshop." "I understand," François quickly replies when Jip has finished translating. "It is entirely up to you if you want to be involved this time, or if we can perhaps try again for the next workshop." "We certainly want to participate," Inge says, "but I think we need some more time to involve the clients. I was thinking, it would be good if I could come and see the workshop in practice, to get a better sense of the atmosphere, and what it is about." "That would be lovely," says François. "And perhaps you could also come over to OOK, introduce yourselves, talk a bit with the clients." "So they know our faces," Jip says. "Maybe that's a reason why people haven't applied? That they don't know what they are getting into?" "Yes, that might be part of it. But remember that we only had a few weeks to find candidates for the workshop, and they coincided with the May holidays. Many guides and patients were away for one or even two weeks." Inge says. François is surprised "I didn't know that," he says, "I had no idea that you have these long holidays... But anyhow: I would be perfectly happy to come to OOK several times, and perhaps just assist in any way to make myself useful," says François. "It might help people feel more comfortable to join the workshop." Then he turns to me. "Perhaps Nanne has some thoughts too? – oh, I'm sorry, Inge, I didn't introduce you properly... Nanne is reporting on the whole residency process, that's the main reason he joined us today." "Hi Inge," I say, "nice to meet you, even if it's online." "We've gotten used to it, haven't we?" "Yeah, I guess... So, can I ask you: had you expected a better response to the open call?" "Well, we had certainly hoped at least some of the clients would be interested. We posted the open call on our Facebook page and other channels, the guides approached several people individually, but I'm afraid it takes more time." "I think that is the crucial point," I say. "We've started the Residency for the People with a lot of energy, it's one of the great things about the project, we're excited about it and we just want to get things going. But we can't simply expect everyone else to move at the same pace. We need to adjust our process to the tempo of the people we are working with, especially with the neurodiverse community." François agrees: "That certainly is an important lesson we've learned today: people have to get to know us first, we need to establish some sense of trust, and take it from there." "So let's focus on that the coming weeks," Inge says before she signs off, "because we would really like to see this work."

The three of us remain behind. It slowly sinks in that this is a serious set-back. Even if we have enough candidates for the workshop, it will be harder to structure it or conduct it without the professional guidance of OOK. “Perhaps my mom knows someone who could help,” says Jip, “she works in special education.” She’ll also talk to her brother, who is neurodiverse, if he wouldn’t like to join the workshop. “That would be really nice,” I say, “but what worries me is that without OOK, the story isn’t quite the same. We really depend on including OOK clients in the workshop for their collaboration; that’s not an ideal situation. Of course, I understand it completely – the billable hours – but it would be better if we found a way to do this more independently. With another party perhaps, who might be willing to contribute to the hours, so OOK could approach it as an opportunity to expand their guide’s expertise, even if it’s not with their own clients.” “For now, we’ll just do the workshop with the people we have,” says François, “and hopefully we can learn some things along the way. Some people will come and see what’s happening, and we’ll have some results to show too. Better next time.” On that resilient note, we say goodbye.

May 19, 2021

Lucas would like to invite Waew, who is currently in Thailand, to conduct a residency about dumpling making. “The bar needs to serve food too, and I think it would be really great if Waew could reach out to various Asian communities in Eindhoven to come up with a menu of dumplings.” Waew was already involved in previous RftP events, like the mask-making workshop last summer with the creative expat women, and she helped redecorate the bar as well. “Perhaps you can help write an application for funding from Cultuur Eindhoven?” Lucas says. “First of all, I love the idea of the dumpling menu and making it into some kind of residency with Waew,” I say. “However...” How to put it? “I’m not sure how often we can apply with Cultuur Eindhoven, and we might need some funding for the residencies that we plan to coincide with Dutch Design Week. So my main concern is whether dumplings should be our priority right now. Perhaps it’s good to discuss it with François, and contact Cultuur Eindhoven to hear what they have to say?” “Hmm, you’ve got a point. I’ll do that and get back to you.”

There’s a great update by François:

*A billboard has risen! Last week we built the billboard, the first major communication effort for RftP. It was a production. Lucas had spotted some used sheets of particle wood across the street we could get for free. I ruled against it, concerned that the boards were too heavy to mount high up and that they were not water-proofed, advocating for more appropriate and lighter materials that were worth the effort. I was a little concerned that my recommendation was an act of French frivolity or of American wastefulness going against Lucas’ practical and cost-saving instinct, which in this case I value as very Dutch qualities. Funny how collaborations and communal ventures can struggle with such small details when there is an overall agreement of the big picture.*

*So we went to the construction material company and ended up not doing too bad after all. We had agreed on a 250 euros budget for the billboard and we spent 228 euros (excluding some screws that were purchased later and a small salvaged rain roof). We bought 3 sheets of beautiful exterior-grade plywood including a salvaged one and all reclaimed steel posts. Luca, our beloved helper, was with me and helped a lot. We secured everything in and on top of Lucas' van. Three 5-meter posts on the roof, three sheets of plywood half sticking out from the back doors and more plywood strips sticking out from the passenger window. Luca aptly described the van as a porcupine. He was really concerned about everything getting loose and rolling on the road back to Kerkstraat. He was so imaginative in describing the possible catastrophe that I spent my time more worrying about him worrying about things, than worrying about the van load.*

*The construction began in the afternoon and lasted another 2 days. I like to compare it to the kind of communal barn building performed by the Shakers in the US, where people come together to build a large structure, achieving a sense of common purpose fulfilling a need much greater than the functional value of what is built. At the beginning I was also involved with Lucas and his intern Alice on designing posters to stick on the billboard. There was some back and forth, and that, added to my construction duties, made me lose patience a bit. So I let Lucas and Alice do their magic while I was doing mine. Friday night, the billboard was up and it looks beautiful, better than we could have imagined. I care less for what will go on it. I feel the billboard itself, even stripped and naked, is a strong communication statement already, a sign that is a signifier as much as signified (excuse my semiotic arrogance), an instant icon just like the Hollywood giant letters or Mount Rushmore. That moment of bliss lasted the whole weekend and a bit more until Laurens, the caretaker of the Church next door who is also responsible for our property, knocked at the door to inform us that the municipal services were inquiring about the billboard and if we had built it with a permit. What? That cannot be. Today we spoke again with Laurens and it seems that things will be workable with the city. We hope that will be OK as we are positioning the billboard as a temporary art installation. But it has already gained a permanent spot in our hearts and minds.*

*Today I had a very nice phone conversation with Maarten Heijden, the founder of the ASML Autism Embassy, who received Unblock open call through Nanne's friend. Maarten has been a mechanical architect for years. He is autistic and has two autistic kids. Like many people his age, he has painfully learned to navigate the neurotypical world. One of his kids is more severely autistic and has had a really hard time with traditional education until he was 15 to ultimately change direction and pursue special education. Having witnessed the challenges of so many autistic people, including his own, Maarten decided to act on it 6 or 7 years ago, and started an autism group at ASML. At the beginning it was extremely difficult. Nobody was listening. He was the only one to come forth with his conditions and struggles. He was about to give up when a higher-up director was hired 2 or 3 years ago, and started to listen to him and support his efforts. Today the Embassy at ASML is still small but similar initiatives have started in other Dutch companies and organizations (including ABNAMRO, Shell, ING, Fontys, University of Utrecht, the Dutch Army) and have joined forces to form the Autism Embassy.*

*Maarten is enthusiastic about the residencies. He thinks that there is a cruel lack of such programs, giving a sense of completion and recognition to neurodiverse people. He would like to be involved in some way or another. For example, he thinks that the open calls could be published across the employees at ASML, in autism and neurodiverse Dutch organizations, and in other organizations in and around Eindhoven. Maarten is also intrigued about the design part of the residencies, as they can challenge his creative side.*

May 20, 2021

After discussing the dumpling residency with François, and a call to Cultuur Eindhoven, Lucas thinks it would be best to apply for a project with Waew, but not as a residency. SnelGeld is meant as an impulse for an artistic project, there's very little chance we would get it again to pay for another residency. "For DDW, we can't really count on SnelGeld either, so we need to find some other way to collaborate with people, and present the things we have done so far. For you... If you want to do a residency during DDW too, I don't know..." "It would be good to have some kind of report from DDW, maybe that could be connected to a residency, but I'll think about that later." For now, let's just concentrate on the questions at hand. "By the way," I ask, "does Waew already have a network among the Asian community in Eindhoven?" "Yes, she knows a lot of people, many Thai of course, but she also knows Min Young, for example, who has been running the restaurant at TAC." "At least it makes some sense then to invite her over for this project. Maybe it would be a good idea to see who would want to join in an application; it would allow us to ask for some more funding and make it into a different kind of collaboration, more like the one we have with Atelier NL. We could still invite people to share dumpling recipes, right?" "Sounds like a good idea. Let me sleep on it, think about the best way to do this, maybe make a set up and then get back to you?" "Sounds good."

Jip reports on the past couple of days with Luca:

*Luca had created a design on her phone. She has an app that allows her to draw on her phone, basically with any pen – really neat. It even shows how long she spends on each drawing. She had made a design based on the string quartet, Prokofiev's second, and Lucas helped her transform it into a real pattern, looking at the size and the continuation of the design. The idea was to make blouses for the musicians who play the Prokofiev piece; they are all women. So, last Tuesday, we went to the drapery shop, Smitje, to look for a suitable fabric. Smitje have been around for like a hundred years or so, and the whole shop is crammed from top to bottom with fabrics, buttons, ribbon, you name it... It was so funny, when the lady told us to come a bit further into the shop, where she said there was plenty of space; I could hardly move! But we looked at different fabrics that would be nice for a blouse, and the lady helped us select a pattern as well. Luca was a bit conservative in her taste at first, she just wanted white fabric with a pattern in black ink, but we went back to her tv series, the one she mentioned in her application, to see all the possibilities. We discussed her favourite colours as well, and at some point, I left her to think things over by herself while I went to get some money from the cash dispenser. By the time I returned, she had chosen a soft, light-*

*green fabric, some cotton mix I think, that would flow with the movements of the musicians. We bought ten meters, which should hopefully be enough for four blouses and some test prints. Luca got along fabulously with the owner of the store. She gave her a box of pins as a present. "Oh, how convenient," Luca said, "I've always been using safety pins to keep fabrics together."*

*Yesterday, we went to Make Eindhoven with Alice, to prepare the silk screen frames and to pick the inks for the printing. Pierre [Kops] was helping us, showing colour fans and examples. He was really nice. Based on the manga and the music, Luca arrived at two different magenta hues. And today, we met again, after school hours, to actually print the fabric. This time, Lilia [Scheerder] was advising Luca. She soon found out that the work needed a lot of precision. We had to tape the exact spot where the frame should be. I showed her how to do it a couple of times, and then I realised that 'hey, it's your project!' and let her print the rest. She was really focussed, very precise. At times I wondered if she actually liked it – she wasn't saying much, and it's hard to tell anyway with those mouth masks... But when I checked if she was enjoying herself, she said she loved it. From Make Eindhoven we cycled home together, she's living round the corner from where I live, and she started to talk a bit more about her life. Her brothers, school. I think the kids in her class don't always get her. She loves to read manga – but the original ones in Japanese are made from right to left, and the English translations keep this order. So they're always asking her why she's reading the stories backwards. But they do like to speak English with her, she's a native speaker, with her mom being Canadian. Tomorrow, she's getting a hair cut. She wants it really very short. "That seems like a terrible pity," I said, "you have such lovely long hair!" "Oh, it's just something I do from time to time," she said. "They should cut it just above the ear."*

May 21, 2021

Three in the morning. Why on earth am I still sitting behind my laptop? The Residency for the People really got under my skin, even though I have no idea where it will take us, if it will take us anywhere at all. Meanwhile, the Instagram account has almost three thousand followers – with 13 posts? That is amazing...

When I ask Lucas about the Instagram followers, he tells me he simply renamed the Wallstreet account, keeping the followers. "Took me ages to remove all the old posts though."

May 24, 2021

[...] sent a test email yesterday. To my question what purpose her test may have served, she replies that she would like to work and was wondering what kind of work it is. I guess she saw the announcements in the supermarket... I briefly explain the concept of the residency and ask her to have a look at our open calls. She says she will do so.

May 26, 2021

An application for the Post Corona Sessions! [...] would like to make some furniture or other objects in wood. She's contemplating an apprenticeship with a furnituremaker and a residency with us might be a good way to see if she has any talent for woodworking, and actually enjoys it as much as she thinks she would.

May 27, 2021

The Storioni Festival is streaming the lunch concert with the ADAM quartet for free. Before it starts, there's a short interview with violinist Margot Kolodziej – and she's wearing Luca's blouse! It's off-white with abstract magenta patterns and frills at the hems. The announcer refers to the Residency for the People. He briefly explains the concept, mentions Luca, her age of course, and asks Margot what she thinks of her new outfit. "I think it is really pretty. The pattern and the blouse remind me of the folkloristic songs that inspired Prokofiev for the string quartet we're going to perform today." I listen to the concert and make some screen captures, just to have some image. The four women look fabulous in their blouses, the magenta fits the décor and the lighting perfectly; an ocean of pink and magenta colours filled with the excited, energised sounds of Prokofiev's composition. The colliding, dissonant tones, the clashes between sweet and frantic melodies – when you know it was written during the German invasion of Russia, it is hard not to hear the distress and, for lack of a better word: impatience in the first and third movement. The blouses *actually* fit the music. Watching the outcome of the residency on stage like this fills me with joy - which takes me by surprise. I must be getting old to be all sentimental.

Helen Milne, shop manager at the New Order of Fashion Store, and James Mason have helped put together the blouses. It was François who got them involved; he promised to help them out with something else in return.

May 31, 2021

Margriet calls me about the best way to go about a SnelGeld application for a dumpling club. She now wants to apply for three people, including herself and Waew. RftP would only be a partner, not an applicant. "I'm afraid that is still not going to work, Margriet. Cultuur Eindhoven only honours applications from people with an actual address in Eindhoven, either as a resident, or as a professional maker with a workplace in town." We discuss some options and conditions of the application procedure and then she moves on – the deadline is tonight.

One more application for the Post Corona Sessions brings the grand total to three – for two residencies. We're obviously not doing enough pr, or not the right kind of pr. I check the Instagram account; it hasn't been updated in weeks... At least we can get started with the website, Christian is our only candidate for *Home is where the ♥ is*, so very little need to put his proposal in front of a selection committee. I'm actually looking forward to call him with the good news.