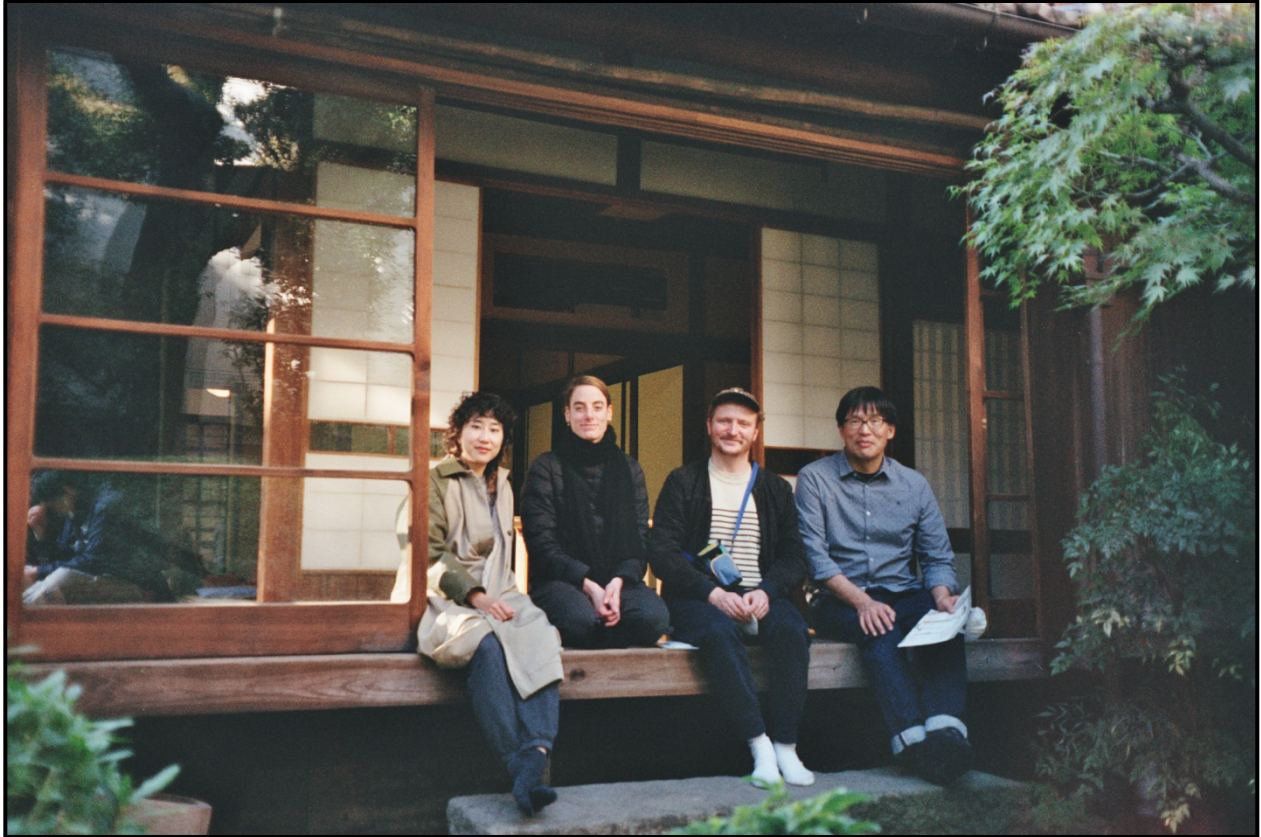


#5 – The Metropolitan Edition

BUoY, Tokyo – 7th of December 2022 – 26th of December 2022



The context

In the beginning of winter-arriving-in-Europe, Menzo and Mirte traveled to Japan, where autumn was still present with coloured leaves on the trees and mild temperatures (read summer temperatures for Norwegian standard). For three weeks, Other People, common ground worked in Tokyo, of which 10 days Menzo and Mirte the two of them, and 10 days with the invited Japanese performing artists Sachi Masuda and Tsuyoshi Kondo.

Thanks to the tip of the Dutch Embassy, BUoY became the place for the residency of Edition #5. From the first moment, Kako Kishimoto, the head of BUoY, was very fast answering and enthusiastically helping out to facilitate the realization of Edition #5. Our working place was a space that is an extension of a café, where only a plastic curtain was making a division. This meant that we sound-wise shared the space with the café when it was open. Singing practice could only take place during the closing

hours of the café. Also making sound was not really appropriate when other people were around using the space.

BUoY is a place for performing arts in Tokyo, close to Kita-Senju station. It is a well designed, renovated former bowling hall on the first floor, as well as a former sento (public bath) in the basement. Many of the elements from previous usage are kept visible. It gives a raw, as well as beautifully designed feeling of the space. The floors are concrete, though upon arrival Mirte and Menzo were able to put puzzle foam mats on a part of the space. As well was there a movable white block that served as a wall, almost like a backstage, where we could redress in privacy when the café was open.

The fact that edition #5 took place in a metropolitan city colored also very much the experience. To go somewhere, it took time. Never there was silence, always surrounded by sound and many people. The feeling of wanting to do many things was very present, and thereby we were very busy and made long days. It was easy to connect with new people, as there were many people around us. It was clear that the structure of behaving in common space, was very present. As an individual there was strongly the feeling of being part of something bigger.



Language/ interpretation/ translation

This edition was the first edition of which language that needed interpretation was part of the work, as two people in this Edition could not speak Dutch/Flemish and the people who do, cannot speak Japanese. For the first ten days, the working language was Dutch/Flemish as Mirte and Menzo were only working with the two of them. From the moment the group for Edition #5 was complete, the working language was usually English, the language everybody shared. This leveled the playing field in a way, because it meant that nobody spoke in their native tongue during the work.

The issue of translation became most apparent during the sharing, which we decided to do in both English and Japanese. This act of interpreting caused the sharing to take much longer than we had anticipated, but was definitely a necessity to be able

to communicate with all people that attended. The translation also created a dynamic between the translator and the person translated. This left little room for the translator to give their own input apart from the translation. As well as the speaker being translated, adjusting the way of speaking to more clear and short sentences. This was not experienced as negative, but is something to be mindful of.



Translation came up as a practical tool in clarifying terms or intentions. Trying to answer the question: 'How would you translate it in your language?' often led to a discussion about a word or intention, about what something means and doesn't mean. This led to a deeper and more communal understanding of the terms used in the work of the group. Only later in the working period, this was realized, so it is something to discuss earlier in the process of the edition next time.

Network of colleagues and places

Edition #5 was the first edition for which it was possible to invite more colleagues to join Other People, common ground, something the past 2,5 years of corona-related



restrictions prevented before. It felt like the extreme right timing to finally involve other people. The colleagues who joined the project were Tsuyoshi Kondo and Sachi Masuda. They both brought their own practices from theatre and dance and on top of that both speak Japanese and English. Both quickly became important additions to the group and valued and full-fledged colleagues within the project. The connection with new colleagues of Other People, common ground, raises the question how we deal or will develop the network of colleagues of Other People, common ground.

Other People, common ground wishes to explore ways to keep the network alive, taking into consideration that it will probably won't be impossible to bring every colleague that has ever contributed to the project to every following edition physically. Nonetheless it is an active question as ways

to keep the network connected by writing, meeting up digitally, offering some space for colleagues from previous editions to join in on upcoming editions, or helping them set-up spin off projects are being explored. These are of course only our first thoughts and they will become more clear and urgent as our network grows.

Within this exploration there is the question of the residue. The residue is whatever it is the project leaves behind at the place it took place, and with the people that took part, but also the other way around. The place and the people that gave shape to any edition, influence and help to form the project as a whole. Keeping the network connected is also a way of making sure the residue doesn't fade. Being aware of the residues is also a way of keeping the network connected.

I was thinking about the project when I was walking on streets, watching views time to time. I guess this extra room/space in our daily life to reflect/notice/aware of is part of residues from the project. The question is how long I can keep the space in my head. So it is quite good you two meet twice a year to keep reminding yourself. A supplement or vitamin for the soul, I guess.

-Tsuyoshi Kondo, December 2022-

Sharing



For this edition, a moment of sharing with around ten people was organized. The attendees were both people we knew and people unfamiliar to us. When organizing the event, it was chosen to see this event as a continuation of the work as a group, only now with more people. Because of this, the focus was mainly on proposing some of the exercises that had been done during the work in Edition #5. The exercises that were most appealing from being tried out with more people than the four colleagues of Edition #5.. Because of this, and the desire not to make the evening last too long, there was only very limited time for a discussion. This is something that might be changed next sharing, as the discussion seems to be an important part of the work, both for the colleagues of Edition #5 as well as the attendees of the sharing.

A question that came up was: 'Who are we doing the sharing for?' On the one hand, it was just a continuation of the work, on the other hand there was a feeling that of presenting something, a responsibility to entertain the audience. This feeling is probably quite normal considering the setting, but it is interesting to explore if it is really necessary, and if there are alternatives.

The question came up why sharing should be in the end of an edition, maybe it could be interesting to organize a moment of sharing earlier in the process? Maybe a sharing moment happens several times during an edition?

In addition to the sharing moment on the last day of Edition #5, Mirte also shared in a presentation about Other People, common ground, in the seminar of Ypam Exchange 2022 in Yokohama.

Serendipity

During this edition, Menzo and Mirte happened to run into many people who have connections to them directly, to friends, and friends' friends... by sheer serendipity. Once, Mirte found that 'Papa Noel,' the proprietor of a cafe in Minami-Senju area, is the father of a dancer who she knew, and another of us had friends in common. There were also many unexpected encounters with random people. Many of them were kind, eager to help out, and many of them just gave warm feelings. It is crazy to think about how Menzo and Mirte were able to feel connected, even though they were in such a busy place with many people.

Mariage

Already in edition #2: The Noise Edition, somebody from the residency place Cas-Co, mentioned the reference of this project to a marriage. As the phase of getting to know each other is somehow over, and it more and more gets visible links to a relationship in the Menzo-Mirte relation, the reference to a marriage becomes prominent. As in any relationship, irritations and patterns become more noticeable, and that creates the need to actively work on improving it. The commitment of working together for 20 years, is a kind of contract that strongly reminds of a marriage in itself. And even though Menzo and Mirte only see each other once a year, it still is important to remember that the relational work is a part of the work.

Relational work is at any time also part of the work as a performing artist, where often the premises is working in groups. Practicing talking openly with the focus on relations is important, and surely part of the work. It is something that is rarely mentioned as such, but is something that should not be underestimated. Not it's importance but also the practice it takes to become better at it.



Ourselves

Mirte just realized a premiere of a project she worked on for two years, and intensively for the past 6 months prior to the fifth Edition. This coloured very much the tiredness of her body. Though at the same time she is in a happy period of her life, feeling a lot of motivation and life energy. Mirte feels easily at home in Japan, and thereby is generally very happy to be in Tokyo for this Edition.

During the months leading up to this Edition, Menzo was thoroughly exploring the relation between his work and travel. He feels a need for his work to be more rooted, more local and feels a distance to what is sometimes called the international art field. While he doesn't feel more at home within this field, he does feel that the project and he himself benefited greatly from the experiences of this Edition. He is very eager to explore more how a sense of home can become more prominent within the project. He felt equally overwhelmed and excited by the city of Tokyo.

Credits Edition #5

Colleagues: Menzo Kircz, Mirte Bogaert, Sachi Masuda & Tsuyoshi Kondo.

Residency: BUoY Tokyo

Many thanks to: Bas Valckx of the Embassy for helping us out in so many ways, Kako Kishimoto of BUoY for hosting us, Jan Derk Diekema for the tour through Yokohama, Luke Macaronas for being very welcoming and taking Menzo along, Antiona Lui for taking care of Yuri so Yoshi could come to work, the proprietor of Senju Tamuraya for keeping his hostel so clean, quite and hospitable, the many performers we got to see perform, the patient people of Tokyo for helping us around, the sento's of Tokyo for taking away our aches and stress.

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