Group 2: Legacy & New Generation

Keywords: giving, sharing, listening, spontaneous, context, love, individual versus group, movement, respect, vulnerability, equal versus unequal generosity, generosity as a weapon or tool, future

Method and basic questions:
- Visual combined with theater
- Theory and action
- courage and vulnerability

Agree to disagree
In the written text, the participants of Group 2 did not reach a consensus on one general definition of generosity. They decided to cast their different definitions of generosity into characters and to create a play. In this visual imagery, the transdisciplinary team discovered a wealth of messages and symbolism. The accompanying text simultaneously brings a strong theoretical framework and could potentially serve as a basis for all other groups of TUE, chapter II.

The importance of the setting: nature. The human being then enters the picture. In picking up a simple stone, generosity is given a physical form. Is the conceptualization of generosity a human act or concept ? How does that impact generosity?

With the image of and interactions between the various protagonists, generosity takes on complexity and reveals the various layers of power that can emanate from it. Each character carries a distinct point of view. In the play we also see a persiflage on the way in which generosity is marketed by television today, as a show with a lot of boasting about 'how good we are'. The persiflage stands in sharp contrast with the authenticity of the message and true meaning of generosity.
A new dynamic emerges from the wordless choreography of the dancer. The dance creates a natural interaction between giver and receiver, dancing and seeking contact in a desire for connection. The dancer wants to do something with his body, to set an action in motion, with a clear motivation: to make a personal contribution.
The character who rejects generosity is ultimately at the center of the event and becomes the center of attention, around which all the other characters revolve. It is a visualization of a creeping danger that lurks in generosity, a danger of abuse of power and dependence.
The play culminates in a Babel-like confusion of tongues, with chaos and noise. From that confusion, a new balance must grow.
The play ends with the camera turning 180 degrees, symbolizing the possibility of change. There is hope in this reversal. Perhaps this is the serendipity of the accident?

In its comments, the TT emphasizes the maturity of the group, which clearly shows that the group members know what they have been thinking about, that they have realized that generosity is not always innocent and that it can be accompanied by undesirable concentrations of power. Nor have they failed to notice the power that lies in refusing generosity, and the generosity that can be hidden in divergent opinions. Generosity can be selective: why are we so open to receiving war refugees from Ukraine, while those from Syria sometimes have to sleep outside for days on end to get

anywhere near a government. Generosity can also lead to polarization. Does the media bear a responsibility here? Or are there other factors that play a role?

The TT wonders whether equal generosity is possible and if so, how it can be achieved. What role does the media play in that process? Lines of thought that could possibly be interesting additions to the thought process of Group 2, in which the seeds of a new way of dealing with charity are present.

Group 2 also highlighted the importance of authentic action, in which characters have difficulty connecting, except through the dancer who seeks and finds connection with each and therefore is actually the cement in the group. It is important to ask where the action that the dancer's movement entails comes from.

It reminded the TT of the Leonard Cohen song: There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in.

Can we induce that movement through authentic action. Does generosity come from our ability or from our disability ? Can we learn it from that same perspective? What about the woke movement and the tension between the individual and the system? Are we too quick to forget what it is to be generous as an individual precisely because there is a social security... Or do the social safety net and social security enable generosity and freedom for the individual?

The TT came up with some specific questions to ponder: can we institutionalize generosity and if so, how? Can governments be generous or do they erode generosity by undermining its authenticity? How can we guard against the solution becoming the problem? Can and should generosity be a central element in creating and designing our future society? Is it an element in sustainable governance?

Do we need a symbol for generosity?Why or why not? Is generosity a human concept or act, or does it also exist in a pure form in nature. Is it possible to achieve an equal generosity for all? Perhaps the context and structure of society can trigger generosity? Is generosity different from charity and can being generous trigger more generosity?

ARTWORK: Legacy & New Generation
By Koen Vanmechelen

Two of my works sprang immediately to my mind after having seen the mesmerizing act by this group. First, Legacy shows how complex even the act of being generous has become. How dangerous and imbued with power. Something which can lead to a Babylonian dispersal when only one element refuses to open up and connect. Yet, the movement germinates the transformation, expressed by the dancer's unpredictable actions, which cause unexpected wrinkles in time and space. A New Generation can generate hope by tilting the perspective, starting from authenticity and spontaneity. Yes, creating hope is an act of pure generosity.

Legacy, 2022
Mixed media on canvas (peacock feathers, neon, African mask, taxidermy, sword, gold leaf)*
200 x 150 x 7 cm
© Koen Vanmechelen

New Generation, 2022
canvas, mixed media (Indian powders, charcoal, egg shells, glass, grain, feathers), neon*
200 x 150 x 12 cm
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*all animals died a natural death