

DEPARTEMENT CULTUUR, JEUGD & MEDIA

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ULTIMA 2016 Amateur Arts Radicalisation Forum Theatre

The events in Paris and Brussels and the controversy that followed left deep scars in the Brussels community; more specifically within the Muslim community of Molenbeek. The women of Caleidoscoop, an organisation aimed at the women of Molenbeek under the wings of De Vaartkapoen community centre, decided to take action: Forumtheater Radicalisering - Radicalisation Forum Theatre.

Caleidoscoop had already worked with Forumtheater, which proved to be a challenging and creative way to tackle difficult subjects like domestic violence. A few women with migrant backgrounds worked with the director Har Tortike on short improvised scenes about the issue of radicalisation, not with the aim of making this a conventional, closed show but in order to lay the basis of a dialogue with the audience. Because this is precisely the strength of Forumtheater's methodology: starting with a theatrical approach, engaging discussion between actors and the audience on sensitive topics.

The jury feels that Forumtheater Radicalisering's approach is a refreshing method which compares points of view and opens new perspectives, with a formula founded on the real needs of a target group which (particularly in the cultural landscape) rarely has a voice. The great merit of this project is the fact that it makes it possible to discuss extremely sensitive topics like radicalisation but also broader societal issues like oppression, discrimination and poverty.

This approach was not invented from scratch but is greatly indebted to Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed. This form of theatre practices improvisation without a set, costumes, make-up or a fourth wall. The dialogue between actors and the audience is a key element in Forumtheater's method. This artistic vision is quite unique in the theatre landscape of Flanders and Brussels, but essential in order to achieve the project's substantive objective.

Forumtheater Radicalisering has managed to break down taboos on social issues and open them up for discussion in a creative, stimulating and inspiring way. And the fact that it speaks through the voice of women with a migrant background (sometimes they are even personally involved), is even more admirable. The jury thus wishes to give these women the recognition they deserve for their valuable voice in the debate but also for their artistic performance as (amateur) theatre makers.