



ENCATC praxis

A monthly e-magazine on art & culture internships + skills & training + community + career tips

Need inspiration
for your bright
idea?



SPECIAL ISSUE 92

EDITORIAL

Are you looking to be a cultural entrepreneur?

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Are you looking to start your own creative company? In this special issue we have collected 14 interviews with cultural entrepreneurs in 7 countries!

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EDITORIAL

Are you looking to be a cultural entrepreneur?

For this special issue of *Praxis Magazine*, ENCATC has put together a collection of interviews with cultural entrepreneurs. What can you learn from their experiences and insights? How have they overcome challenges while starting their own business or start-up?



Photo via flickr « Watching the Skyline » by Peter (CC BY 2.0)

In 2016, ENCATC launched a new section for interviews in *Praxis Magazine* for students studying cultural management and policy. The idea to start an interview series with young and established cultural entrepreneurs grew from the alarming reports of youth unemployment and job insecurity in Europe. Our aim was to share the positive and successful stories from professionals who had followed their creative and cultural passions, creating their own employment through new businesses and start-ups. We wanted to learn and share with our readers how these entrepreneurs got their start, where they found funding, what sort of challenges they faced, what keeps them motivated as well as advice for aspiring cultural entrepreneurs.

This December issue gathers all of our 14 past interviews into one place making it easier to compare the experiences of those interviewed, learn about the attributes of successful cultural entrepreneurs,

compare challenges, highlight trends, and learn about problem solving.

These interviews come from entrepreneurs in seven different countries. They include 11 women and 5 men. There is also a rich diversity of cultural sectors represented among their interests, including theatre, music, fashion, creative industries, and education.

We hope these serve as inspiration for our readers, especially those who might be thinking to start their own cultural business. We strongly believe these are valuable stories to tell so our readers can take the best of these experiences and use for their benefit.

Are you a cultural entrepreneur? Do you want to share your story in a future issue of Praxis?
[trainee@encatc.org!](mailto:trainee@encatc.org)



BELGIUM

Maaïke Wuyts—Aubergine Artist Management

ENCATC spoke with Maaïke Wuyts, founder and general manager of Aubergine Artist Management, a company that supports musicians, especially jazz musicians. Learn how the company has developed and grown over the years!



ENCATC: What is the story behind Aubergine Artist Management and why did you want to start this Brussels based agency?

Maaïke Wuyts: I founded Aubergine Artist Management because I was getting a lot of offers to work as a freelance manager/producer for musicians and festivals. Somehow I wanted to construct something that on the long term could grow into a valuable company offering support within the musical field and where I could have a real team around to support me. It also became clear quite fast that especially in the subgenre of jazz there was a lack of support for creating artists. Within the pop/rock and also within performing arts, companies as mine – who

offer tailored services to artists – already existed. Brussels is a real jazz metropolis with many different clubs and venues promoting jazz and it's very central in Europe, so it's easy to tour from there.

Being independent and having a flexible work schedule was also very appealing to me. Although, at that time I was not aware of the huge responsibilities being your own boss can bring with it. So the flexible work schedule wasn't always to my advantage. Especially in the beginning it meant doing much longer hours than my peers; and they also had an employer or a team covering them when they would be sick or wanted to have holidays.

ENCATC: How has Aubergine grown over the years to establish itself where you are working with some of Belgium's most talented artists?

Maaïke Wuyts: It all started with Fabrizio Cassol asking me to start managing his band Aka Moon and then inviting me along on some of his other projects as his production assistant. So from the start I was actually working with one of the most respected Belgian composers and jazz bands. Word spread quickly and I guess almost every Belgian jazz leader has contacted me at some point to start working for them. Of course I wasn't able to work for all of them. Especially since being a music manager in a subgenre like jazz isn't a very commercial lucrative business. It's a whole lot of work for very low income. So you take a lot of risks. The only way I could really grow from a one-person organization into a more established company was applying for state funding. After project funding in 2009, I finally got a structural fund in 2010. That allowed me to 'employ myself' on full time base – because Aubergine is a VZW (non profit organisation) – and also to have a part-time assistant work with me. This gave the base and motivation to professionalize more and by 2013 I got more state funding, generated more income and could have 2 full time employees.

ENCATC: In today's fast-paced world and developments in technology and cultural consumption habits, how do you stay innovative for production, promotion, and tour support provided to artists?

Maaïke Wuyts: There are a lot of different software programs to 'make life easier' for the production and tour manager. However, we tried several of them and somehow it doesn't really work for us. We have so much 'tailoring' to do, that there's always something in these systemized models that doesn't fully work. It's very time-consuming to transfer all your data to these software packages whereas it doesn't really fit your daily practice. And then, once you start, a few years later some other model comes up looking more promising and you have to restart from zero. So recently we just decided not to go for another promising program, but to stick with our excel-database and basic mail-program.

Maybe one day we'll find 'the program' that really simplifies our work. But for now we keep it simple. On a level of promoting our musicians we did evolve into making audiovisual EPK's (Electronic Press Kits), which is quite an investment. In a video between 2 and 5 minutes we want to capture the atmosphere of

an artist and his or her new project. It tells promoters, the press and the public so much more than a plain text with some web links to the music.

Also, social media has become such an important promotion tool. So yes, digital evolution does have an impact on us... but it increased our actual workload and promotion costs instead of decreasing it!

ENCATC: What have been some recent innovative projects you have worked on that you are most proud of?

Maaïke Wuyts: Every new album or project we support I'm proud of. It isn't always necessarily 'innovative'. But it's always fresh. I'm proud of the way my team now deals with the communication and I'm proud of the audio-visual EPK's we're producing since last year, because that's very valuable for the promotion of each project.

Another thing I value a lot is our sense of collaboration. We have developed a strategy to present several of our bands together, trying to promote 'Belgian Jazz Abroad'. We have constructed several valuable partnerships with foreign organizations and also Belgian embassies and delegations abroad to support our artists in the development of their international career. And not without success!





ENCATC: Can you give us some background into your educational and professional experience that has led to where you are as General Manager today?

Maaïke Wuyts: I have studied Art History - with specialization in Performing Arts - at the University of Ghent. I did some internships at Theaterfestival and a theatre company called Martha Tentatief and I soon realized that I liked working behind the scenes a lot, but I didn't have sufficient knowledge for that. So I extended my studies with a master in Cultural Management at the Faculty of Economics in Antwerp University.

After these studies I combined two half time jobs: one as an artistic coordinator in an art centre (Nona) in Mechelen and one as general coordinator of a young video and multi-media art collective called Vidiots in Ghent. Working within the art centre gave me a context of colleagues who had more experience and assisted me in many issues. At the same time, I could apply these new experiences in a very independent way in my job at Vidiots. So from the very start in my career I had a 360° perspective on how to run projects and an organization. Of course it took some time to become really good in all the sub disciplines and along the way you really discover which are your strengths and weaknesses.

ENCATC: What skills or personal attributes do you think you have that help you run your business?

Maaïke Wuyts: Perseverance and flexibility are keywords for me. Perseverance because nothing comes easily and you can't let one disappointment get in the way of your motivation. Flexibility, because you sometimes can't 'solve' a problem or something doesn't go as planned or hoped for and then you have to be able to adapt your plan. Also intuition is an asset. In the beginning I didn't always dare to follow my intuition and let others convince me with their arguments. I doubted my intuition and followed the arguments of others and that's when things can go wrong. Because often people are just trying to convince you of something for their own personal benefit and not always for the greater good of the project!

ENCATC: What had you wished you had known before you started your business?

Maaïke Wuyts: That being an employer is the hardest part of running your business. The selection of good employees is very important and it's better you don't do it on your own. Especially in a very small organization as mine, everybody has to be like a pillar. The small team is the foundation of the whole company. With all the collaborations we have with the different artists and partners, there are a lot of

responsibilities to carry. If you can't rely on the support of your co-workers/employees to take on their responsibilities, it can become really heavy. So you definitely need a solid team.

ENCATC: What have been the most difficult challenges you have encountered? How have you been able to overcome them?

Maaïke Wuyts: Like mentioned just above, being an employer finding the right co-workers has been one of my biggest challenges.

Also the constant changes in the funding system of the Flemish Government is a big challenge. Especially because about 60% of our income is generated by this funding.

Since I started 10 years ago the way to ask for funding (paper versus digital), the criteria and the way of their 'judging your file' has changed several times. So you always have to re-invent things and it's always a lot of work. Besides our structural funding we handle all the different project funding files for the artists and projects we work for so on a yearly base handle around 20 funding files (application and reports!) and that's a lot of paperwork and very time-consuming. But also very important in order to make artistic dreams happen.

ENCATC: How did you go about getting start-up funds and how did you use them to get your business up and running?

Maaïke Wuyts: I explicitly started a non-profit organisation (VZW) because I knew that was the only way to get funding from the Flemish Government under the cultural funding system. Besides that there were no start up funds. The only extra effort I did was investing a private (personal) funding to keep my cash flow under control. With the cultural subsidies you need to make your 100% turn-over in one year, but you get only 90% of funding in that year and get the next 10% only by the end of the following year. So you always lack an important sum of money, because you can't make profit to cover the deficit.

ENCATC: What advice would you give to students or early career professionals looking to start their own business or project?

Maaïke Wuyts: Follow your heart and your intuition, but be realistic. Always make a good budget and follow up on it regularly. Take calculated risks. Dare to ask questions to the 'more experienced'. Use your

position as a 'junior' and don't be afraid that you'll lose your credibility. 'Seniors' like to give advice, it makes them feel valuable. A good mentor is worth a lot.

ENCATC: What keeps you motivated and going?

Maaïke Wuyts: There were times in my life I was questioning the amount of time and energy I put into my work. Working in the arts sometimes feels like serving big egos. And you also often feel that despite all the efforts of some venues, the 'art-consumer' remains a highly educated wealthy individual. At times I was tempted to stop working in this field and direct my energy into humanitarian aid. Because at least I would do something 'meaningful' for the world.

But then again I have served so many projects, witnessing that music really brings people together, not only on the stage but also in the experience. And people working in the cultural field all have the intention of uplifting this world through their creations and productions. And that's something that keeps me motivated! Because in the end I just want this world to be a more friendly and beautiful place.

ENCATC thanks Aubergine Artist Management for also supplying ENCATC with photos for the layout production of this interview.

About Aubergine Artist Management



Aubergine Artist Management is a Brussels based agency that offers management, production, promotion, administrative and tour support to some of Belgium's most talented artists.

The focus is on jazz and beyond, ranging from improvised music, urban sounds, world music, contemporary music, post rock, noise, funk and hip hop.



www.aubergineartistmanagement.com/en/about-4.html

BELGIUM

Alessandro Cozzutto—*Once upon a time in Anderlecht*

ENCATC spoke with Alessandro Cozzutto, the creator of an innovated idea that helps people to film and edit videos using only a smartphone. We learned what it's like to run new a business like the *Once upon a time in Anderlecht*, what impact or influence can this project have on the cultural sector *and* what is the most difficult challenge to getting started.



ENCATC: What is *Once Upon a Time in Anderlecht* and where did you get the idea?

Alessandro Cozzutto: Ouatia is a project funded by the Roi Baudouin Fondation ("Fonds Alain De Pauw") and is about filming and editing videos using only a smartphone. On one side, I use my smartphone to collect video-portraits of common people that live in this peculiar area of Brussels. On the other side, I teach groups of kids this amazing new frontier of video making.

The idea came while walking all in, around, and outside Brussels. I have noticed how many communities exist here and how little they know one other. I think that if you want to know somebody, you have to give him or her the opportunity to introduce him or herself. Videos are the most effective form of communication. And smartphones are the most accessible tool for video making.

ENCATC: What impact or influence can this project have (or is having) on the cultural sector?

Alessandro Cozzutto: Smartphone video making can help the cultural sector optimise its shrinking resources, for sure! On the project's website you can find and download for free our manual of smartphone video making. We want people that work in the cultural sector, as well as those who work in the European institutions, to stop being afraid of going out of the box: DO IT YOURSELF! Sometimes you cannot do it all by yourself: a good website or good video require the intervention of a professional. However, in many other occasions you simply need a smartphone, a lot of patience, and a bit of creativity.

ENCATC: How do you see your project having an impact on major political developments such as UK's EU referendum?

Alessandro Cozzutto: The Brexit is the dramatic consequence of a majority of people not having the right or the possibility to speak for themselves. Because of a cynical – and by no means wrong – political calculation by David Cameron, the UK as well as continental citizens were forced whether to take the side of bureaucratic Brussels or to despise the democratic value of international union. However, people's opinion on this subject is much more diverse.

We all want a better European Union, don't we? So, what can a common citizen do? Well, I can take my phone and describe what better union I have in mind. That does not change the world, but it forces me to frame a political idea and to be accountable for it! Anyone, even my mother, can use a smartphone to record a video and speak out. Each contribution to social dialogue, even the smallest ones, can help fight the indifference that is so typical of modern cities, in Europe and elsewhere. This form of dialogue is pivotal because social exclusion explains violence and terrorism much better than religion or any other 'culturalist' thesis.

ENCATC: What is your educational and professional background?

Alessandro Cozzutto: As the long and boring answers that I have given so far may suggest, I have a PhD in Political Science and International Relations. However, I am much more interested in sharing rather than accumulating knowledge. So, after defending my dissertation, I have gathered my passions and launched my own business: "Slash Prod," an out-of-the-box communication agency. Digital communications have the power to connect people, which embodies not only a deep political message but – more importantly – a deeply revolutionary political meaning.

ENCATC: What skills do you have that you think have been particularly useful for you to successfully launch Once Upon a Time in Anderlecht and carry it forward?

Once upon a Time in Anderlecht is a side project, so I had to make a lot of noise, mostly by myself, in the time that was not taken by our clients. I guess that my technical skills made all this possible. However, a project like this is not about making a bunch of cool

videos. It's more about building relations of trust and intimacy with the people to whom you ask to share his or her personal story. And from this point of view, I think one can only improve.

ENCATC: What had you wished you had known before you started this project?

Alessandro Cozzutto: When I wrote the project, I thought that the opportunity of learning how to make cool videos with a smartphone would have been a self-evident reason to join the initiative. However, I soon realised how difficult it is to get people's true attention when one wants to take new forms of communication out of a strictly technical domain.

ENCATC: For the project, how did you go about getting startup funds and how did you use them?

Alessandro Cozzutto: I have started working on this project after getting the support of the Roi Baudoin Fondation. They are amazing, they fund every year a lot of social and cultural projects. Without them, I would have never had the possibility to give my time to such a challenging project.

I recommend anyone in Brussels to start looking for funds via this kind of institutions or similar ones in their own countries. I also tried with other institutions and companies, because I wanted to increase the project's impact, and I will try again now that the project is almost over, as it's easier to "sell" a cultural project once that it is made rather than when it is still a piece of paper only.

ENCATC: What was the most difficult challenge to starting the project and how did you overcome it?

Alessandro Cozzutto: Well, when I wrote the project, I thought of smartphones for filming, not for editing. I was not aware of the existence of smartphone applications for video-editing yet, so I was afraid that I would have not been able to find enough laptop computers for all participants! And once I found out about these apps, the challenge became to find the participants! Lucky me, now I can count on the support of local associations (Casi-uo, Beeldenstorm, Boutique Culturelle), institutions (the Fine Arts Academy and the Resistance Museum Anderlecht), and even a member of the European Parliament, [Angelika Mlinar](#).

ENCATC: What advice would you give to others looking to start their own project?

Alessandro Cozzutto: I would say that starting is the most important step. I have lost so many battles since I have started freelancing, but each loss gave me the necessary knowledge and expertise to overcome more important battles that came afterwards.

Beginning is always tough, failing even more, but isn't it just pathetic to spend all your life copying someone else??? Isn't our life simply too short to avoid trying??? So, my advice is to refrain from looking for good reasons, convenience, or social approval of what you want to do. If you feel that this is the right thing to do, just do it. And in case failure comes, just embrace it. Losers are the new winners.

ENCATC: What keeps you motivated and going?

Alessandro Cozzutto: We all have dream jobs in mind. My dream job was some vague idea of creativity and freedom, rather than money or reputation. Once Upon a Time in Anderlecht was an audiovisual-sociological experience that I was really keen on doing, because of my background and because – like many others – I could anticipate Charlie Hebdo's attack way before it took place. One year before, I have launched this crazy digital campaign called "House of Cats," which was the European version of House of Cards with cats in the place of Kevin Spacey, because I thought it was a good way to make fun of the Eurobubble [[watch the trailer](#)]

Do you want a dream job? Make it true, then! People wonder: "what should I do with my life?". As a European, I read the answer in our common history. People like Albert Camus or Pier Paolo Pasolini told us to revolt against a system that says you cannot be happy without a stable job, and that you cannot have a stable job if you are not obedient and respectful. Our common history keeps me motivated. Our human destiny keeps me going.

See some examples here: www.facebook.com/SlashProd/videos/

Learn more and read the description of Ouatia here: www.slashprod.eu/



Once Upon a time in Anderlecht

The project addresses small groups (3-5) of teenagers from Anderlecht and aims at teaching them basic notions of video making via smartphone. The acquired skills will allow them to collect the point of view of the older generations with respect to the last 50 years of change in the neighbourhood. A website will turn the raw material in a digital historical archive of the city's life and transformations. Subject to availability of additional funds, the raw footage will allow Slash Prod to edit a professional 15/30 -min documentary of the initiative and additional communication with the goal of promoting the circulation, the impact, and the copyright-free replica of the project.

For young European professionals, Midi station is the low cost arrival to the capital of the continent, for many people who live in Brussels it is the departure to Paris or London. For some, what is beyond the station can always become a real estate exploitation, for others what is beyond can be discovered thanks to the mediation of arts, sport, and habits, rather than rhetoric and filters. Turkish and Moroccan communities have filled the red brick buildings where the families of Italian miners used to live, but the logic of biases and the lack of encounter can cross generations. The project aims at giving young and less young people concrete tools that allow them to tell themselves, out of filters, the neighbourhood history. For this history would tell the present of this city. That would be a great achievement already.

In a complex modern city, such as the capital of Belgium and Europe, multiple identities live together, most of the times on the basis of a mutual indifference. Video making is the most powerful instrument to talk - within today digital environment - about life beyond the digital world. If the core of this communication project lies in Anderlecht, its motivations and main goal is to reach and connect people beyond any geographical, social and cultural division line.

BELGIUM

Emanuele Butticé—OneHouseStand

ENCATC was introduced to Emanuele Butticé, a young Belgian entrepreneur to learn about his innovated idea that enables people to rent out their homes for a couple of hours and enables customers (corporate and private) to find unique places to host their event. We learned what it's like to run new a business like the OneHouseStand and what is the most difficult challenge to getting started.



ENCATC: What is *OneHouseStand* and where did you get the idea?

Emanuele Butticé: OneHouseStand is a platform for individuals and businesses to create their events from A to Z online (space, menus, drinks and entertainment), all in just a few clicks. OneHouseStand offers exclusively private homes, normally inaccessible to the public. Therefore, any individual can offer his or her house on OneHouseStand to obtain additional income.

The idea came from several findings. Organising an event can be a real obstacle course: choosing the perfect space, catering, entertainment (wine tasting, DJ, musicians, etc.). There's also the need to have access to all this information at competitive and transparent prices. Moreover, we realized that the most successful events are often those spent in the warm atmosphere of a home or with friends.

ENCATC: *Qu'est-ce que OneHouseStand et d'où vient cette idée ?*

Emanuele Butticé: *OneHouseStand est une plateforme permettant aux particuliers et aux entreprises de créer leurs événements de A à Z en ligne (espace, menus, boissons et animations), en quelques clics. OneHouseStand propose exclusivement des maisons de particuliers, normalement inaccessibles au public. Dès lors, tout particulier peut proposer sa maison sur OneHouseStand afin d'obtenir des revenus complémentaires.*

L'idée est née de plusieurs constats. Organiser un événement est un véritable parcours du combattant : choisir l'espace idéal, un traiteur, des animations (dégustation de vin, dj, musiciens etc), le tout à un prix concurrentiel et transparent. De plus, nous nous sommes rendus compte que les événements les plus réussis sont souvent ceux passés dans le cadre chaleureux d'une maison, chez soi ou chez des amis.

ENCATC: What impact or influence can *OneHouseStand* have on the cultural sector and in particular heritage?

Emanuele Butticié: In our portfolio of properties we also have listed houses, such as Autrique House Victor Horta or the house of the famous painter Marcel Hastir. This allows, in part, to value Brussels' great architectural heritage which often lacks visibility, especially on the web.

ENCATC: *Quel est l'impact ou l'influence OneHouseStand peut avoir sur le secteur culturel et le patrimoine en particulier?*

Emanuele Butticié: *Dans notre portefeuille de biens nous disposons aussi de maisons classées, comme par exemple la maison Autrique de Victor Horta ou encore la maison du célèbre peintre Marcel Hastir. Ceci permet, en partie, de valoriser le grand patrimoine architectural Bruxellois qui manque souvent de visibilité, surtout sur le web.*

ENCATC: What is your educational and professional background?

Emanuele Butticié: We are two founders. I graduated in Business Engineering at the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (ULB). Before embarking on this adventure, I worked in consulting, and BI and Strategy. My co-founder, Maurizio Chicco has a degree in Economics from Bocconi (Milan). A year before we started One House Stand, he was working for a startup in the FinTech Asset Management.

ENCATC: *Quel est votre parcours académique et professionnel?*

Emanuele Butticié: *Nous sommes deux fondateurs. Je suis diplômé en Ingénieur de Gestion à la Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (ULB). J'ai travaillé en conseil, BI et Stratégie, avant de se lancer dans cette aventure. Mon co-fondateur, Maurizio Chicco a son diplôme en Economie à la Bocconi (Milan). Maurizio a travaillé pour une startup fintech en asset management pendant un an avant de se lancer dans cette aventure.*

ENCATC: What skills do you have that you think have been particularly useful for you to successfully launch *OneHouseStand* and carry it forward?

Emanuele Butticié: There is no real skill type to have, no academic or professional experience can really teach a person how to run a business. Everything is learned along the way.

However, several personal attributes necessary to engage in entrepreneurship, helped us:

- A self-taught approach. Indeed, in an initial phase, financial resources are often lacking, it is impossible to outsource tasks. Therefore, we have acquired a host of new skills to develop our business, starting from the web (SEO, programming, ...) marketing (growth hacking, content marketing, ...). The acquisition of these skills is a great asset, both personally and in the subsequent phases of development of the company, such as for recruiting new teammates.
- To have nerves of steel. In the launch phase stress becomes a daily constant. It is imperative to manage it so as not to lose sight of the company's priorities.
- Energy Overflow. We no longer count the sleepless nights in our offices.

ENCATC: *Quelles compétences possédez-vous qui sont particulièrement utiles pour lancer avec succès OneHouseStand et porter ce projet?*

Emanuele Butticié: *Il n'y a pas vraiment de compétence type à avoir, aucune expérience académique ou professionnelle ne peut véritablement apprendre à un individu comment lancer son entreprise. Le tout s'apprend en cours de route.*

Toutefois, plusieurs attributs personnels, indispensables afin de se lancer dans l'entrepreneuriat, nous ont aidé :

- Une démarche autodidacte. En effet, dans une phase de lancement, les ressources financières sont souvent absentes, il est donc impossible de sous-traiter des tâches. Dès lors nous avons dû acquérir une panoplie de nouvelles compétences afin de faire évoluer notre entreprise, en partant du web (SEO, programmation,...) au marketing (growth hacking, content marketing,...). L'acquisition de ces compétences est un véritable atout, tant au

niveau personnel que dans les phases ultérieures du développement de l'entreprise, comme par exemple pour le recrutement de nouveaux coéquipiers.

- *Avoir des nerfs d'acier. Dans une phase de lancement le stress devient une constante quotidienne. Il est impératif de le gérer afin de ne pas perdre de vue les priorités de l'entreprise.*
- *Déborder d'énergie. Nous ne comptons plus les nuits blanches passées dans nos bureaux.*

ENCATC: What had you wished you had known before you started your business?

Emanuele Buttici: The sector in which we operate is an area that lacks a lot of transparency and/or some players are unresponsive to technological innovations. Time is a very precious thing and we should avoid wasting it (unfruitful appointments, even unnecessary).

Qu'auriez-vous voulu savoir avant de lancer votre entreprise ?

Emanuele Buttici: Le secteur dans lequel nous évoluons est un secteur qui manque énormément de transparence et où certains acteurs sont peu réactifs aux innovations technologiques. Le temps est une chose très précieuse et nous aurions pu éviter d'en perdre (rendez-vous peu fructueux, voir inutiles).

ENCATC: How did you go about getting startup funds and how did you use them?

Emanuele Buttici: We have, for the time, sought no

funding. In the launch phase of our marketplace, the biggest cost would have been generated by the web platform development, a cost we could eliminate by learning to program in the summer of 2015.

ENCATC: Comment avez-vous obtenu des fonds de départ et comment les utilisez-vous ?

Emanuele Buttici: Nous n'avons, pour le moment, recherché aucun financement. Dans la phase de lancement de notre marketplace, le plus grand coût aurait été engendré par le développement web de la plateforme, coût que nous avons pu éliminer en apprenant à programmer, l'été 2015.

ENCATC What was the most difficult challenge to starting your own business and how did you overcome it?

Emanuele Buttici: A key factor that differentiates OneHouseStand from traditional event agencies, apart from the unique places we propose, is our transparency. To achieve this transparency we had to consult each of our partners to guide our direction to obtain standardized high-end offers with transparent prices. This proved more complicated than expected and we have noticed a lot of friction to what we're trying to accomplish.

ENCATC: Quel a été le défi le plus difficile pour démarrer votre propre entreprise et comment l'avez-vous surmonté ?

Emanuele Buttici: Un facteur clé qui différencie OneHouseStand des agences événementielles traditionnelles, hormis les endroits uniques que nous proposons, est notre transparence. Afin d'obtenir



How does OneHouseStand work?

1st Step

Find unique homes, lofts, mansions or unusual rooms and make virtual visits 360°

2nd Step

Select and hire the perfect location for your event: product launch, anniversary, team building, shooting, pop-up store, wedding and more

3rd Step

Choose: bar, catering, DJ, animations and more

4th Step

Welcome your guests with confidence and enjoy your event!



Learn more and read the description of *OneHouseStand* in French: www.onehousestand.com

cette transparence nous avons dû consulter chacun de nos partenaires pour les guider dans notre direction afin d'obtenir des offres standardisées, de haute gamme, avec des prix transparents. Cela s'est avéré plus compliqué qu'on ne le pensait et nous avons pu remarquer beaucoup de friction envers ce que nous essayons d'accomplir.

ENCATC: What advice would you give to others looking to start their own business?

Emanuele Buttici: The undertaking is a real emotional rollercoaster. We must have nerves of steel, excellent methodology, and a lot of energy.

ENCATC: Quels conseils donneriez-vous donner à d'autres qui cherchent à lancer leur propre entreprise?

Emanuele Buttici: Entreprendre est une véritable montagne russe émotionnelle. Il faut donc avoir des nerfs d'acier, une excellente méthodologie et beaucoup d'énergie.

ENCATC: What keeps you motivated and going ?

Emanuele Buttici: The satisfaction of our customers and owners listing their homes on OneHouseStand, providing a service that is needed, appreciated and used is extremely rewarding

ENCATC: Qu'est-ce qui vous garde motivé et vous permet d'aller de l'avant ?

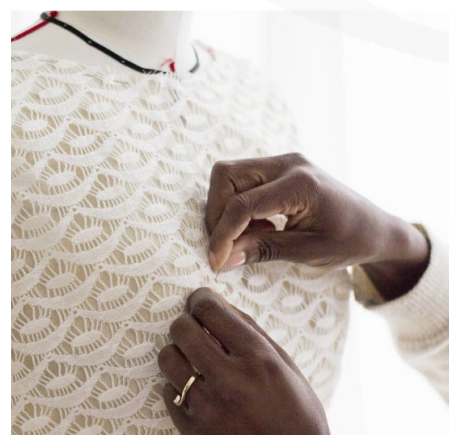
Emanuele Buttici: La satisfaction de nos clients et des propriétaires listant leurs maisons sur OneHouseStand. Proposer un service qui est nécessaire, apprécié et utilisé est extrêmement gratifiant.



BELGIUM

Valentine Avoh— “Valentine Avoh”

Back in June 2015 at an ENCATC Cultural Happy Hour in Brussels, we first met Valentine Avoh, a talented young designer who has had success launching her own brand and working with satisfied clients to realise their dream wedding dresses. ENCATC caught up with Valentine to learn from her experience as a young entrepreneur and what she could share with students and early career cultural managers looking to build their own business.



ENCATC: When did you start your fashion label Valentine Avoh and launch your website and blog?

Valentine Avoh: I created my blog in 2009 and launched my brand in October 2014 with my first collection of wedding dresses.

ENCATC : *Quand avez-vous lancé votre marque “Valentine Avoh”, ainsi que votre site internet et blog ?*

Valentine Avoh : *J’ai créé mon blog en 2009 et ma marque a été lancée en Octobre 2014 avec ma première collection de robes de mariée.*

ENCATC: Can you give us some background into your design education and experience in the fashion industry?

Valentine Avoh: I have always been passionate about fashion and creating clothing. However I headed towards commercial science studies after my high school studies. I quickly realized that these studies were not my passion and so I set off to follow my first passion that took me to London for 3 years to study styling and model making at the London College of Fashion. I followed thereafter with a one-year certificate in marketing and communication. Meanwhile, I completed internships including one at Alexander McQueen and I really got a taste for meticulous work, noble materials, labour research

and prototyping, all very close to the haute couture that I always admired.

After graduation I was hired as an assistant stylist to designer Samantha Shaw, specializing in the creation of custom wedding and evening dresses.

Then I decided to leave London for Paris where I worked in the studio of Couture Alexis Mabille in preparation for a show of his new collection. It was in Paris that I created my first wedding dress for a friend of a friend. That was in 2009. After Paris I made a short stop in Brussels and then settled in Milan for 2 years. It is in Milan that my blog to really started to catch on and allowed me to develop another of my passions, photography. I became quite by chance street style photographer during fashion week in Milan but also Paris and for some events. My clients included Luisa Via Roma, Courreges, Swide Magazine by Dolce Gabbana, the Rake Magazine, Elle Belgique, Grazia etc... This occupation allowed me to take the time to study Italian after which I returned to my first love working mainly for the designer San Andres Milano as his assistant.

Then back to Brussels and I settled back in during the fall of 2013. I worked with designer Marc Philippe Coudeyre as workshop foreman and designer for 3 collections while preparing and planning the creation of my brand. Since my first wedding dress creation in 2009, I continued to create custom dresses and it became clear to me that this is what brought me the closest to haute couture while remaining profitable and... human, because the custom aspect helps create great relationships with customers.

ENCATC : Pouvez-vous expliquer votre parcours scolaire et partager avec nous votre expérience dans l'industrie de la mode ?

Valentine Avoh : J'ai toujours été passionnée par la mode et la création de vêtements. Cependant je me suis dirigée vers des études en sciences commerciales après ma retho. J'ai vite compris que ces études ne me passionnaient pas et je me suis redonnée vers ma première passion en partant à Londres pour y étudier pendant 3 ans le stylisme et le modelisme au London College of Fashion. J'ai enchaîné par la suite avec un certificat d'un an en marketing & communication. Parallèlement j'ai effectué des stages notamment chez Alexander McQueen où j'ai vraiment pris goût du travail méticuleux, des matières nobles, du travail de recherche et de prototypage, le tout très proche de la haute couture que j'ai toujours admirée.



Après mes études j'ai été engagée comme assistante styliste auprès de la créatrice Samantha Shaw, spécialisée dans la création de robes de mariée et de soirée sur mesure.

Ensuite j'ai décidé de quitter Londres pour Paris où j'ai travaillé à l'atelier du styliste Haute Couture Alexis Mabille durant la réalisation de sa nouvelle collection pour le défilé. C'est à Paris notamment que j'ai créé ma première robe de mariée pour l'amie d'une amie. C'était en 2009. Après Paris j'ai fait un bref arrêt par Bruxelles pour ensuite m'installer à Milan pour 2 ans. C'est à Milan que mon blog a vraiment pris de l'ampleur et m'a permis de développer une autre de mes passions, la photographie. Je suis devenue un peu par hasard photographe street style durant les fashion week de Milan mais aussi Paris, ainsi que pour certains événements. Mes clients incluaient Luisa Via Roma, Courreges, Swide Magazine by Dolce Gabbana, the Rake Magazine, Elle Belgique, Grazia etc... Cette occupation m'a permise de prendre le temps pour étudier l'italien après quoi je suis retournée à mes premiers amour en travaillant principalement pour le styliste San Andres Milano comme assistante.

Ensuite, retour à Bruxelles où je me suis réinstallée durant l'automne 2013. J'ai travaillé avec le styliste Marc Philippe Coudeyre en tant que chef d'atelier et modéliste durant 3 collections tout préparant et planifiant la création de ma marque. Depuis ma première création de robe de mariée en 2009, j'ai continué de créer des robes sur demande et il est devenu clair pour moi que c'est ce qui me rapprochait le plus de la haute couture tout en restant rentable... Et humain, car le sur mesure permet de créer de belles relations avec sa clientèle.

ENCATC: What skills or personal attributes do you think you have that help you to run your business (outside of your design talent)?

Perseverance! Becoming an entrepreneur is really not easy. When creating a business, it takes a fairly large series of hits sometimes daily! Without perseverance we can not get there because you have to quickly learn not to let go when facing difficulties and doors closing. For the rest everything is learned, and if we do not just do it yourself, you have to surround yourself with good people. I am fortunate enough to be self-taught and so I take care of almost every aspect of my business. The design and creation of the site, the photoshoots for the lookbook, marketing and communication, fashion design, styling and sewing.

However I do not venture into accounting, I hired an accountant who I could trust. Where I really had to make effort is with time management and daily management for purchase orders, invoices, emails, etc... This is still the most difficult for me because I have always lacked organization.

ENCATC: Quelles sont les qualités et compétences que vous avez qui vous aident à gérer votre entreprise ?

Valentine Avoh : La persévérance ! Devenir entrepreneur n'est vraiment pas facile. Quand on crée son business, on se prend une série de claques assez importante parfois même quotidiennement! et Sans persévérance, on ne peut pas y arriver car il faut vite apprendre à ne pas lâcher prise face aux difficultés et aux portes qui se ferment. Pour le reste tout s'apprend, et si on ne peut pas le faire soi-même, il faut s'entourer des bonnes personnes. J'ai la chance d'être assez autodidacte et donc je m'occupe de pratiquement tous les aspects de mon business. Le design et la création du site, les photoshoots pour le lookbook, le marketing et la communication, le stylisme, le modélisme et la couture. Cependant je ne m'aventure pas dans la comptabilité, j'ai engagé un comptable en qui je pouvais avoir confiance. Là où j'ai dû faire un vrai effort c'est au niveau du "time management" et de l'administration quotidienne" gérer les bons de commandes, les factures, les mails etc... C'est ce qui reste encore le plus difficile pour moi car j'ai toujours manqué d'organisation.

ENCATC: What had you wished you had known before you started your business?

Valentine Avoh: I knew it would be hard ... We had

been warned at school: "Becoming an independent designer or stylist is 10% design and 90% administration, management, etc..." Otherwise, how to organize my emails, my email inbox is not structured, my files, etc ... Once the train is moving, you lose a lot of time trying to reorganize everything.

ENCATC : Qu'auriez-vous aimé avoir voulu savoir avant de lancer votre entreprise ?

Valentine Avoh: Je savais que ce serait dur... On nous avait déjà prévenu à l'école: "Devenir créateur ou styliste indépendant c'est 10% de design et 90% d'administration, management etc..."

Sinon, comment organiser mes mails, ma boîte mail ne ressemble à rien, mes dossiers etc... Une fois que le train est en marche, on perd beaucoup de temps à vouloir tout réorganiser.

ENCATC: How did you go about getting start-up funds and how did you use them to get your business up and running?

Valentine Avoh: I financed my business myself. I did not want to start this adventure with the stress of a loan especially at the beginning when you have no idea how many sales you'll make. Starting with small means also helps to stay focused on the essentials and not to spend lavishly on things that do not necessarily relate in terms of sales or visibility. I used the profit of my sales to invest in new fabric, in wedding fairs, photo shoots, etc. The first two years I only did what my bank account allowed me to do. Obviously this approach was adapted to my business model. In the coming years I will have to get a loan because I want to grow and hire one assistant or intern and rent a showroom.

ENCATC: Comment avez-vous obtenu des fonds de démarrage et comment les avez-vous utilisés pour mettre votre entreprise sur les rails ?

Valentine Avoh : J'ai financé mon business moi-même. Je n'avais pas envie de démarrer cette aventure avec le stress d'un emprunt surtout au début quand on a aucune idée du nombre de ventes que l'on fera. Commencer avec de petits moyens permet aussi de rester concentré sur l'essentiel et de ne pas dépenser sans compter sur des choses qui ne nous rapportent pas forcément en terme de vente ou de visibilité.

J'ai utilisé le profit de mes ventes pour investir dans de nouveaux tissus, dans des salons du mariage,

photoshoot etc.. Ces deux premières années je n'ai dépendé que de ce que mon compte en banque me permettait. Évidemment cette façon de faire était adaptée à mon business model. Pour les années à venir je vais devoir passer par l'emprunt car je souhaite grandir et engager 1 assistante ou 1 stagiaire et louer une atelier showroom.

ENCATC: What has been the most difficult challenges you have encountered?

Valentine Avoh: time management is a challenge. When you start out, of course you can't afford to hire a horde of assistants, so you must do everything yourself and it takes an enormous amount of time! Expect to work long hours until late in the night. Be willing to do some sleepless nights to finish a particular project on time and be ready to put aside some things that'll have to wait or to get help if you can afford it because the fact is that we can not do everything alone... My blog is on standby because I do not really have time to handle it. We must focus on what really brings in terms of profit ' or visibility . Every effort must be filled to bring in sales or a short- or medium- term customer satisfaction.

ENCATC : Quelle est la plus grande difficulté que vous avez rencontrées ?

Valentine Avoh : Oui, la gestion du temps c'est une difficulté. Quand on débute on a bien sûr pas les moyens d'engager une horde d'assistantes, donc il faut tout faire soi même et cela prend énormément de temps! Il faut s'attendre à travailler de longues heures jusqu'à très tard le soir. Être disposé à parfois

faire des nuits blanches pour finir tel ou tel projet à temps et être prêt à laisser tomber certaine chose ou à se faire aider si on en a les moyens car le fait est que on ne peut pas tout faire tout seul... Mon blog est en standby car je n'ai plus vraiment le temps de m'en occuper. Il faut se concentrer sur ce qui rapporte réellement en terme de profit' ou de visibilité. Chaque effort doit pouvoir rapporter des ventes ou une satisfaction client à court ou moyen terme.

ENCATC: What advice would you give to students or early career professionals looking to start their own business or project?

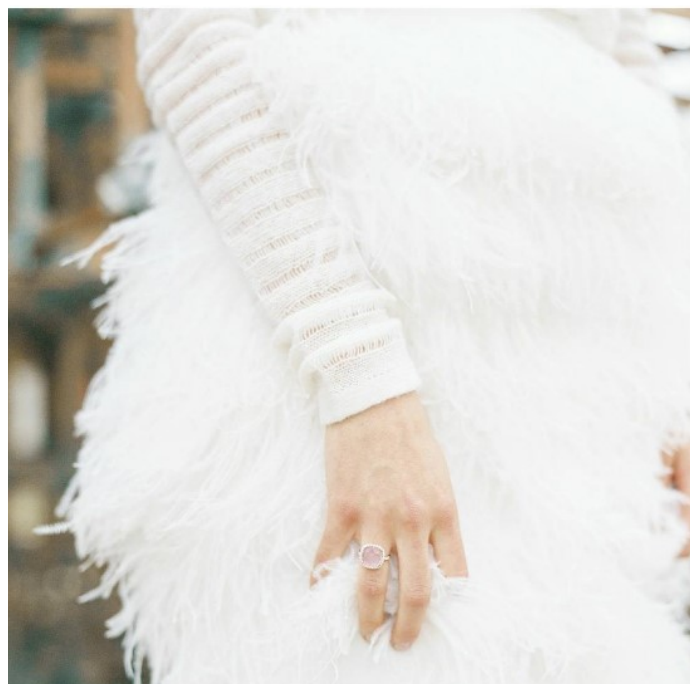
Valentine Avoh: Being in good company! Having friends or people close who know what this experience is like is extremely important because from the outside people often see the positive aspect without imagining all the work there is behind.

Having people who are understanding about the long hours that we spend away from them to work.

Gain some experience working in the field that interests you. We learn a lot from others. I learned many things about running a workshop, the creation of collection, etc. during all my experiences and I use these teachings even daily.

Have a savings or a second job to not end up with nothing. When we start there is often a lot of investment to make, in material or in terms of time and you may not be able to make a living from your craft right away.

Advance gradually. When one starts it is easy to compare what you're doing with the competition or our idols who do the same job for longer than us,



sometimes for generations. We must not forget that they also started small like us and they also passed through difficult times and had doubts before experiencing success. Certain brands are visible from a certain number of years, but in fact no one knows how long earlier stages they took to have to get there, how they wrote a business plan, how many times they were denied, how often they thought about giving up, etc... we must move forward in small steps.

ENCATC : Quels conseils donneriez-vous aux étudiants ou aux jeunes professionnels qui cherchent à démarrer leur propre entreprise ou projet ?

Valentine Avoh : *Etre bien entouré ! Avoir des amis ou proches qui vivent la même chose est extrêmement importants car de l'extérieur les gens voient souvent que l'aspect positif sans s'imaginer tout le travail qu'il y a derrière.*

Avoir un entourage compréhensif des longues heures que l'on passe loin d'eux à travailler.

Travailler avant dans le domaine qui vous intéresse. On apprend énormément des autres. J'ai appris beaucoup de choses sur la gestion d'un atelier, la création de collection, etc durant toutes mes expériences et j'utilise ces enseignements encore tous les jours.

Avoir une épargne ou un 2nd job pour ne pas se retrouver sans rien. Quand on commence il y a souvent beaucoup d'investissement à faire, matériel ou en terme de temps et on ne gagne pas forcément tout de suite sa vie.

Avancer petit à petit. Quand on commence il est facile de se comparer à la compétition ou à nos idoles qui font le même métier depuis plus longtemps que nous, parfois même depuis des générations. Il ne faut pas oublier qu'ils ont également commencés petits comme nous et qu'ils sont aussi passé par des moments de difficultés et de doutes avant de connaître le succès. Certaines marques sont visibles depuis X années mais nul ne sait combien de temps auparavant ils ont mis pour y arriver, combien de business plan ils ont écrit, combien de prêt leur ont été refusé, combien de fois ils ont pensé à abandonner etc... Il faut avancer à petit pas.

ENCATC: What keeps you motivated and going?

Valentine Avoh: My optimism is there so much. The smiles of my brides and their words of thanks. The fact that despite the long hours, stress, etc... I still love what I do and what I am trying to build...

ENCATC : Qu'est-ce qui vous motive et vous fait aller de l'avant ?

Valentine Avoh : *Mon optimisme y est pour grand chose. Les sourires de mes mariées et leurs mots de remerciements. Le fait que malgré les longues heures, les stress etc... J'adore toujours ce que je fais et ce que je suis entrain de construire...*

ENCATC thanks Valentine Avoh for her permission to use photos from her Instagram account.



About Valentine Avoh:

A graduate of the London College of Fashion, Valentine spent over 9 years in workshops, including those of Alexander McQueen, Alexis Mabille and Marc-Philippe Coudeyre. It is from these valuable lessons from the world of fashion and haute couture that today she nourishes her own technique.

Valentine's creations are delicate and exceptional pieces, made to measure in order to preserve their exclusive and unique quality. Having a love of textures and fascinated by old movies, Valentine is inspired by past times and brings them up to date.

In her workshop where coexist in harmony feathers, silk, organza and embroidery, only the elegance, originality, attention to detail and craftsmanship prevail. With Valentine, a wedding dress wants to be different, elegant, unique and sensual.



www.valentineavoh.com

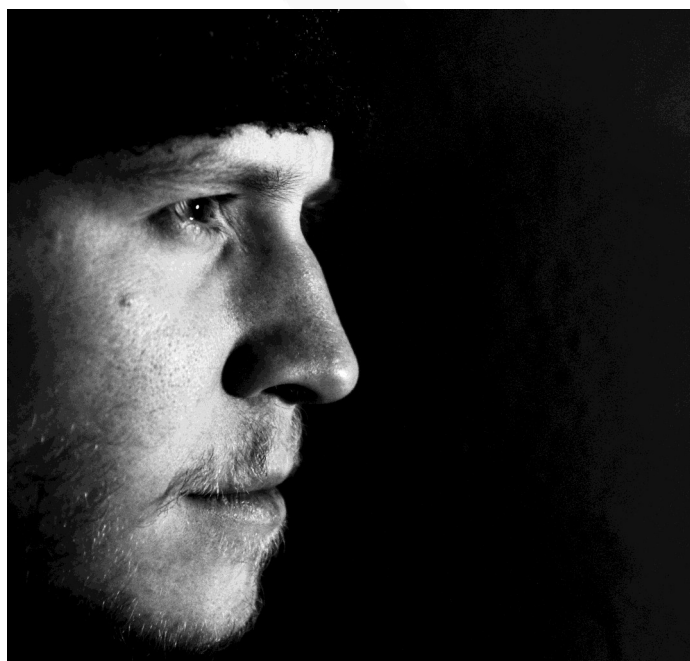


www.instagram.com/valentineavoh/

CZECH REPUBLIC

Jan Hubacek and Zdenka Kujova—GNOMON Production

ENCATC spoke with Jan Hubacek and Zdenka Kujova, founders of GNOMON Production, a growing film company that tries to help young filmmakers in the Czech Republic. See how they overcame the obstacles that came their way and learn from their experience!



ENCATC: What is the story behind GNOMON Production and why did you want to start this film production company?

Jan Hubacek: I got interested in film art when I was really young and I decided to study film and to become a film maker. After graduating university, reality hit me hard and I found out how difficult and expensive it really is to make a film. I figured that apart from funds you also need a great team, because filmmaking is all about teamwork.

I was trying to get in touch with producers and get them to finance my authorial projects. Even though they might have been enthusiastic about it, they were

not able to help me. That is why I decided to make my own film production, not only to make my own original films, but to help other starting filmmakers realize their projects, so they would not need to follow my steps.

ENCATC: Jaký je příběh za GNOMON Production a proč jste se rozhodli založit svou filmovou společnost?

Jan Hubacek: Už v mládí mě zaujalo filmové umění a rozhodl jsem se studovat film. Když jsem vyšel ze školy, srazil jsem se s realitou a zjistil jsem, jak je nákladné opravdu vyrábět filmy a že kromě financí potřebuju taky stabilní tým.

Obíhal jsem se svými autorskými projekty různé producenty, ale ačkoliv byli vstřícní, nebyli schopni mi pomoci. Rozhodl jsem se tedy založit si vlastní produkci. Snažíme se nyní podporovat mladé tvůrce, aby nemuseli postupovat stejně krkolomně.

ENCATC: The audiovisual technology is constantly evolving. How do you stay on top of the latest developments and be innovative?

Jan Hubacek: Audiovisual technology is indeed constantly evolving and that is why we figured it is not worth investing in our own technology equipment. Instead, we always rent the technology required for every shoot, which are pretty fine in the Czech Republic. Also, we try to attend as many workshops or technology presentations as possible. It is really important for us to be aware of what is new in the post-production software world as well.

Zdenka Kujova: Universities and big companies like 2K Czech or Madfinger games have access to the latest technology in Brno and we have a pretty close cooperation between the gaming and the audiovisual industry here. We are in touch, we learn from them, and debate on how to cooperate, connect our fields of interest, and help each other.

ENCATC: Audiovizuální technologie se neustále vyvíjí. Jak s technologickým pokrokem udržujete krok a jak se snažíte být inovativní?

Jan Hubacek: *Technika se opravdu rychle vyvíjí a tak jsme usoudili, že se nevyplácí investovat do vlastní techniky a snažíme se na konkrétní projekty sestavit*

set potřebné techniky a zajistit je vždy z půjčoven, které jsou v ČR dobře zastoupené a skvěle vybavené. Zároveň se snažíme účastnit prezentací, veletrhů a workshopů a sledovat nové trendy v hardware i software technice pro post-produkci.

Zdenka Kujova: *V Brně je úzká spolupráce mezi herním a audiovizuálním průmyslem. Jsme v kontaktu s univerzitami a velkými vývojářskými společnostmi jako je 2K Czech a diskutujeme o nových médiích a možnostech spolupráce a propojení obou našich odvětví.*

ENCATC: What have been some recent innovative projects you have worked on that you are most proud of?

Jan Hubacek: I am most proud of finishing my debut feature length documentary film *Accept* (<http://www.acceptfilm.com/>). Although it is not innovative technology wise, I chose to make a film about contemporary classical music and I think it is quite unique to make film about a minor music genre.

Zdenka Kujova: For me it is a spin off project that we are part of, the app *Pyeniny* – unique audio guide of the mountains *Pieniny* (<http://pyeniny.com>) It is originally a graduate project from Polish students and we are helping them develop the mobile app and keep things going.

ENCATC: Na jaké inovativní projekty, na kterých jste nedávno pracovali, jste pyšní?





Jan Hubacek: Nejvíce pyšný jsme na náš první dokončený film - dokumentární film Akcept (www.akcept.cz), který je speciální svým zaměřením. Vybral jsem si totiž téma vážné soudobé hudby, která je minoritním hudebním žánrem.

Zdenka Kujova: Z inovativních projektů chystáme aplikaci Pyeniny. Jedná se o aplikaci, kterou v rámci diplomové práce navrhli polští kolegové a my jim pomáháme s vývojem a na realizaci jsme získali Visegrad Fund. Projekt je audio průvodcem Pyeninami – jedněmi z nejmalebnějších polsko – slovenských hor, formou mobilní aplikace. (<http://pyeniny.com/en/>)

ENCATC: Can you give us some background into your educational and professional experience that has led to where you are today leading GNOMON production?

Jan Hubacek: I spent a year in High School in the USA and then I studied film directing and screenwriting at University in Zlín. During that time, I went abroad for a semester at the Baltic film and Media school in Tallin and I did internships at Neukölln.TV in Berlin and at Stink in London.

Zdenka Kujova: I graduated from culture management at JAMU Brno and I gained experience in film projects of Czech Television Brno and independent films, Film faculty Zlín. When I received a scholarship from the Bosch Foundation, I went to work for Spinnerei Leipzig Germany. I was hired by the Brno municipality to elaborate the feasibility study for the Creative Centre and I became a tutor for creative professionals.

ENCATC: Můžete nám říci z jakého pozadí pocházíte? Jaké vzdělání a pracovní zkušenosti Vás dovedly až k založení GNOMON Production?

Jan Hubacek: Po roce stráveném na střední škole v USA jsem nastoupil na Univerzitu Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, kde jsem vystudoval režii a scenáristiku. Filmovou režii jsem studoval rovněž na estonské Baltic Film and Media school a absolvoval jsem pracovní stáže v berlínské Neukölln.TV a v londýnské pobočce firmy Stink.

Zdenka Kujova: Absolvovala jsem divadelní a kulturní management na JAMU v Brně, se zaměřením na podporu kultury, granty a kulturní politiku. Zkušenosti jsem získala také na filmových a televizních projektech v ČT BRNO a zlínské Fakulta multimediálních komunikací na Univerzitě Tomáše Bati. Poté, co jsem byla vybrána jako stipendistka nadace Roberta Bosche, odjela jsem na stáž do lipského kreativního centra BAUMWOLLSPINNEREI. Pro Magistrát města Brna jsem pak vytvořila studii proveditelnosti pro projekt Kreativní centrum Brno a v rámci ní jsem se věnovala také například založení filmové kanceláři v Brně. Moje působení je širší, než jen obor filmové produkce, a to nám právě pomáhá s kontakty do dalších odvětví.

ENCATC: What skills or personal attributes do you think you have that help you to run your film production company?

Zdenka Kujova: That would be probably my ability to switch between fields, between film production and management in cultural institutions. I am very flexible and I think my interdisciplinarity makes me a great networker and helps me to connect the right people.

Jan Hubacek: I am a perfectionist and very stubborn too. On the other hand, I am easy going and open minded and for me, trying to keep those attributes in balance is essential to become a great producer.

ENCATC: *Jaké vlastnosti a dovednosti podle Vás máte, jež Vám pomáhají v úspěšném vedení produkční společnosti?*

Zdenka Kujova: *Pravděpodobně to bude moje flexibilita a schopnost přepínat mezi jednotlivými obory, tedy mezi kulturou a filmem. Myslím, že jsem díky tomu schopna propojovat lidi.*

Jan Hubacek: *Ačkoliv jsem tvrdohlavý a perfekcionista, jsem velice otevřený a klidný člověk. Myslím, že právě balancování těchto vlastností je klíčem k tomu, stát se úspěšným producentem.*

ENCATC: What had you wished you had known before you started your business?

Zdenka Kujova: We should have founded our company way sooner. We spent a long time consulting with professionals and asking others for advice, but we only got confused because of the variety of suggestions and recommendations we heard from different people. I think it would have been much better if we had skipped this step, gone for it and started learning by doing it.

Jan Hubacek: I wish I had known better the economics and serious business that accompany film making as I knew it as a director. It is important to be aware of the right people and to know who you need to contact and cooperate with on different phases of film production. So, I wish I had a better insight in this.

ENCATC: *Co byste si přáli vědět před tím, než jste si založili vlastní společnost?*

Zdenka Kujova: *To, že máme naši společnost založit mnohem dříve. Než jsme tak učinili, dlouho jsme konzultovali a ptali se spousty lidí na rady. Dostalo se nám velmi rozdílných odpovědí na jednu tutéž věc, které nás jen mátlly. Bylo by jednodušší do toho prostě jít a učit se tzv. za pochodu.*

Jan Hubacek: *Já bych si přál, abych tehdy lépe znal proces "producentování". Myslím tím celou ekonomiku a byznys, který se skrývá za natáčením filmů. Také je opravdu důležité mít v branži kontakty a vědět, kdy a na koho je potřeba se obrátit. Bylo by skvělé mít na začátku o tomto větší povědomí a přehled.*

ENCATC: What have been the most difficult challenges you have encountered? How have you been able to overcome them?

Zdenka Kujova: I think that for both of us it was finishing our first feature length film and to get funds to complete it. Jan was directing it and I was producing it. Most of our work was done pro bono and it was hard to keep going. I must say that without grants and public funding we would not be able to make it through.

ENCATC: *Co pro vás bylo zatím nejobtížnější výzvou? Jak jste ji překonali?*

Zdenka Kujova: *Myslím, že pro nás oba to byla výzva spojená s dokončením prvního celovečerního filmu Akcept. Většinu práce jsme odvedli bez nároku na*



honorář. A bez veřejných dotací bychom jej nikdy nedokončili.

ENCATC: How did you go about getting start-up funds and how did you use them to get your production company up and running?

Jan Hubacek: Everything we invested in our company in the beginning was our own money earned by our hard work. There are no funds for creative start-ups in the Czech Republic.

Zdenka Kujova: In the Czech Republic, there are either grants for cultural projects and events or for technology industries. We are neither of those, so it is hard to get any funds for film productions here.

ENCATC: Jak jste pracovali s veřejnými fondy a jak jste je použili k založení a provozu vaší společnosti?

Zdenka Kujova: V Česku je možné získat granty a dotace pouze na kulturní projekty nebo naopak jako firma lze o ně žádat, jen pokud se zabýváte výrobou, technologiemi, a tradičními průmysly. My se jako podnikatelé ve filmové produkci pohybujeme někde mezi tím, takže nemáme šanci žádat něco na založení nebo provoz naší produkce. V ČR neexistují veřejné programy zaměřené na kreativní průmysly – startuj nebo scaleupy.

ENCATC: What advice would you give to students or early career professionals looking to start their own business or project?

Jan Hubacek: I would tell them to go and learn from more experienced professionals. Internships are very important because you learn the work flow and how the pipe line goes in the industry, you meet people and sometimes make contacts for life. My other advice would be to make some financial reserves before you start your own business.

Zdenka Kujova: I agree that internships are great and help you grow professionally. I use knowledge and experience from my internships every day.

ENCATC: Jakou radu byste dali studentům nebo lidem začínajícím v oboru, kteří si chtějí založit svůj vlastní byznys?

Jan Hubacek: Určitě ať vyjedou na stáže a učí se od zkušenějších. Je důležité získat povědomí o tom, jak to v branži chodí a jak na sebe navazují jednotlivé fáze natáčení. Taky je určitě dobré udělat si napřed finanční rezervy a až pak se pustit na „volnou nohu“. Když tyto kroky vynechají, chybí jim pak finanční polštář a kontakty v oboru.

Zdenka: S tím souhlasím, protože oba čerpáme ze svých stáží doted. A začínající můžou na stáž i k nám do Brna.

ENCATC: What keeps you motivated and going?

Zdenka Kujova: Every success makes me more motivated. Also, that our team is still growing and we manage to realize more projects than we have planned.

Jan Hubacek: For me it is the vision of future projects that we try to make.

ENCATC: Co Vás motivuje a dodává Vám sílu pokračovat?

Zdenka Kujova: Hlavně to, že se nám daří, náš tým roste a postupně realizujeme plány, které jsme si předsevzali.

Jan Hubacek: Pro mě je to taky vidina dalších zajímavých projektů, které nás čekají a realizujeme je.

ENCATC thanks GNOMON Production for also supplying ENCATC with photos for the layout production of this interview.

About GNOMON Production:

GNOMON Production s.r.o is Czech production company located in Brno, founded in 2015. Owners of the company have produced their own short films and documentaries for over 7 years. Production company also ensures promotional, music and educational videos or short films for non-profit organisations. Currently there are two projects in pre-production, two in production and one feature film in distribution.

Learn more about GNOMON Production by clicking on the links below:



WEBSITE:
<http://www.gnomonfilm.com/>



JAN HUBACEK'S DOCUMENTARY:
www.acceptfilm.com



FRANCE

Hanaë Grimal—CHapet Hill

For this interview, ENCATC spoke with Hanaë Grimal, one of the founders of the CHapet Hill, a publicity and audiovisual agency in Dijon, France. She recently attended the 2nd Encounters of Cultural and Creative Entrepreneurship on 23 and 24 November 2016, organised by ENCATC member, The Burgundy School of Business with the Coursive Boutaric, creative business center. As a young cultural entrepreneur with a successful business we were eager to learn more!



ENCATC: What is the story behind CHapet Hill and why did you want to start this independent publicity and audiovisual agency?

Hanaë Grimal: CHapet Hill is above all a story of long-time friends - some of us have known each other since kindergarten! Over the years during our years of study we lost touch but upon returning to Dijon, our hometown, we quickly reconnected and wanted to combine our skills to create our own agency to produce commercials. That was six years ago and our motivation was to create a company that resembles us, would carry our values of solidarity, goodwill and creativity, without forgetting we wanted to have fun, "whistle while you work" as sung in Snow White!

ENCATC : *Quelle est l'histoire de CHapet Hill ? Pourquoi avez-vous voulu créer cette agence indépendante de publicité et d'audiovisuel ?*

Hanaë Grimal : *CHapet Hill est avant tout une histoire d'amis de longue date - certains d'entre nous se connaissent en effet depuis l'école maternelle ! Nous nous sommes perdus de vue durant nos années d'études mais de retour à Dijon, notre ville natale, nous avons rapidement voulu allier nos compétences pour créer notre propre agence de production de films publicitaires. C'était il y a six ans et notre motivation était alors de créer une entreprise qui nous ressemble, qui porterait des valeurs de solidarité, de bienveillance et de créativité, sans*

oublier qu'on souhaitait s'amuser, "siffler en travaillant" comme dirait Blanche-Neige !

ENCATC: Can you give us some background into your educational and professional experience that has led to where you are at CHapet Hill?

Hanaë Grimal: Among the agency's four founders there are two types of profiles: film technicians, with a sound engineer and a director of photography, both graduates of the National Institute of Radio-Electricity and Cinematography (INRACI) in Brussels. Our salesman has a radio journalism background and me, from the press. After my studies, I was a journalist and then editor of the first regional pureplayer before joining the CHapet Hill team as an executive producer. This position requires skills in administrative, financial and legal management that I have learned to develop on my own. Two years ago, I wished to be accompanied in this learning process and I decided to do an MBA at the Burgundy School of Business in Dijon (a member of ENCATC) - I am writing my final thesis that will conclude my studies.

ENCATC : Pouvez-vous expliquer votre parcours scolaire et partager avec nous ce qui vous a mené à créer CHapet Hill ?

Hanaë Grimal : Parmi les quatre fondateurs de l'agence, il existe deux types de profils : celui de techniciens du cinéma, avec un ingénieur du son et un directeur de la photographie, tous deux diplômés



de l'Institut national de radioélectricité et cinématographie (INRACI) de Bruxelles. Notre commercial est quant à lui issu du journalisme radio et moi, de la presse écrite. Après mes études, j'ai été journaliste puis rédactrice en chef du premier pureplayer régional avant de rejoindre l'équipe de CHapet Hill en tant que productrice exécutive. Ce poste exige des compétences en gestion administrative, financière et juridique que j'ai appris à développer seule dans un premier temps. Il y a deux ans, j'ai souhaité être accompagnée dans cet apprentissage et j'ai suivi un MBA à la Burgundy School of Business à Dijon - je suis d'ailleurs en train d'écrire mon mémoire qui vient clore ma formation.

ENCATC: The audiovisual technology is constantly evolving. How do you stay on top of the last developments and be innovative?

Hanaë Grimal: We have always followed the work of other agencies, but also of freelance videographers. The world of video is a bit like that of fashion: the avant-garde of today will be the taste of tomorrow! We draw inspiration from the precursor spirit of these films, which we adapt to our projects through the concepts we create, but also the imagery we apply to our spots. To do this, we need to use ever changing camera equipment: a camera is often obsolete after two years. That is why we use our own equipment, which is good value for money, for small projects. On bigger movies, we often rent cameras whose quality justifies the exorbitant price!

ENCATC : La technologie audiovisuelle évolue constamment. Comment vous assurez-vous de rester au top des derniers développements et innovateur ?

Hanaë Grimal : Nous avons toujours suivi le travail d'autres agences mais aussi de vidéastes freelance. Le monde de la vidéo est un peu comme celui de la mode : l'avant-garde d'aujourd'hui fera le goût de demain ! Nous nous inspirons donc de l'esprit précurseur de ces films, que nous adaptions à nos projets à travers les concepts que nous créons mais aussi le grain d'image que nous appliquons à nos spots. Pour cela, nous devons utiliser un matériel de prise de vue sans cesse en évolution : une caméra est souvent obsolète au bout de deux ans. C'est pourquoi nous utilisons notre propre matériel, qui est de bon rapport qualité prix, pour les petits projets. Sur les plus gros films, nous louons souvent des caméras dont la qualité du rendu justifie le prix exorbitant !

ENCATC: What have been some recent projects you have worked on that you are most proud of?

Hanaë Grimal: We are proud of all our projects! For example, when we make a commercial for a cake business, we are helping it develop, creating or safeguarding jobs and invigorating its ambitions. We like to play a role in the economic development of the territories where we work. In the same way, we flourish in educational projects, such as accompanying pupils at a secondary school specialising in agriculture to realise a short film. Nevertheless, one of the projects that most impressed me recently is a film we made on the memorial of a martyr village of the 2nd World War located in the Morvan. The son of a gunman shared his testimony, sharing his fight against acts of contemporary barbarism.

ENCATC : Y a-t-il des projets réalisés récemment dont vous êtes particulièrement fière ?

Hanaë Grimal : Nous sommes fiers de tous nos projets ! Par exemple, lorsque nous réalisons un film publicitaire pour une entreprise de fabrication de gâteaux, nous l'aidons à se développer, à créer ou à sauvegarder des emplois et à galvaniser ses ambitions. Nous aimons jouer un rôle dans le développement économique des territoires où nous travaillons. De la même façon, nous nous épanouissons dans des projets pédagogiques, tels que l'accompagnement des élèves d'un lycée agricole dans la réalisation d'un court-métrage. Néanmoins, l'un des projets qui m'a le plus marqué récemment est un film que nous avons réalisé sur le mémorial d'un village martyr de la 2e guerre mondiale situé dans le Morvan. Le fils d'un homme fusillé partage son témoignage, en faisant part de son combat contre les actes de barbarie contemporaine.

ENCATC: What skills or personal attributes do you think you have that have helps you to run your business?

Hanaë Grimal: During a shoot, you must be able to find a solution quickly to all problems that can arise: equipment that breaks down, an actor who withdraws at the last moment, the weather that isn't cooperating... You must know how to be resourceful! On this point, we all agree. This common quality is reflected in the day-to-day management of the company and constitutes our core competence: the flexibility of CHapet Hill. Obviously, everyone has qualities and skills of their own, whether they are relational, technical, creative ... As far as I am

concerned, my function as the company's manager requires rigorous organization and daily concentration. I do not occupy this position by chance - let's say I'm the kind of person to do an Excel spreadsheet when I go on vacation...

ENCATC : Quelles sont vos qualités et compétences qui vous aident à gérer l'agence ?

Hanaë Grimal : Durant un tournage, il faut être capable de trouver une solution rapidement à tous les problèmes qui peuvent se poser : du matériel qui tombe en panne, un acteur qui se désiste au dernier moment, la météo qui fait des siennes... Il faut savoir être débrouillard ! Sur ce point, nous nous rejoignons tous. Cette qualité commune se retrouve dans la gestion quotidienne de l'entreprise et constitue notre cœur de compétence : la flexibilité de CHapet Hill. Evidemment, chacun a des qualités et des compétences qui lui sont propres, qu'elles soient relationnelles, techniques, créatives... En ce qui me concerne, ma fonction de gestionnaire de l'entreprise exige une rigueur d'organisation et de concentration quotidienne. Je n'occupe pas ce poste par hasard - disons que je suis le genre de personne à faire un tableur Excel quand je pars en vacances...

ENCATC: What had you wished you had known before you started your business?

Hanaë Grimal: As we embarked on the adventure that is CHapet Hill, we did not know exactly where we were going. None of us had studied business, we hardly knew what a business plan was... Having film and journalism backgrounds we were not very comfortable in this new universe, as we were discovering, especially when it came to talking about our fees and pricing. Because of this lack of confidence, we have failed in some negotiations. Therefore, I strongly encourage young entrepreneurs to be aware of the value of their skills and their work and not to have complexities on the issue.

ENCATC : Qu'auriez-vous voulu savoir avant de lancer votre entreprise ?

Hanaë Grimal : En nous lançant dans l'aventure de CHapet Hill, nous ne savions pas tout à fait dans quoi nous mettions les pieds. Aucun d'entre nous n'avait fait d'études de commerce, nous savions à peine ce qu'était un business plan... Issus du cinéma et du journalisme, nous n'étions pas très à l'aise dans l'univers commercial que nous découvrons, notamment lorsqu'il était question de parler de nos tarifs. A cause de ce manque d'assurance, nous



avons échoué certaines négociations. Aussi, j'encourage vivement de jeunes entrepreneurs à avoir conscience de la valeur de leurs compétences et de leur travail et de ne pas avoir de complexe sur la question.

ENCATC: What has been the most difficult challenges you have encountered? How have you been able to overcome them ?

Hanaë Grimal: We were 25 years old when we created our agency: our youth and our lack of experience have long been a hurdle for convincing companies to trust us. Fortunately, our creativity, our enthusiasm and the originality of our concepts seduced our first customer, then a second ... Word of mouth has done its work and since then, our backlog is full! We continue to devote a lot of energy to each of our projects and we are known for the quality of the films we make. A second challenge continues to be encountered every day: we are particularly attached to the balance of internal relations, that each member of the team finds his or her place and flourishes there. For this, exchanges, more or less informal, are encouraged. If we do not watch over each other, who will?

ENCATC : Quelles sont les plus grandes difficultés que vous avez pu rencontrer ? Comment les avez-vous surmontées?

Hanaë Grimal : Nous avons 25 ans lorsque nous avons créé notre agence : notre jeunesse et notre manque d'expérience ont longtemps été des freins pour convaincre les entreprises de nous faire confiance. Heureusement, notre créativité, notre

enthousiasme et l'originalité de nos concepts ont séduit un premier client, puis un second... Le bouche à oreille a fait son oeuvre et depuis, notre carnet de commandes est plein ! Nous continuons à consacrer beaucoup d'énergie sur chacun de nos projets et nous sommes reconnus pour la qualité des films que nous réalisons. Un second défi continue à être relevé chaque jour : nous sommes particulièrement attachés à l'équilibre des relations internes, à ce que chaque membre de l'équipe trouve sa place et s'y épanouisse. Pour cela, les échanges, plus ou moins informels, sont encouragés. Si nous ne veillons pas les uns sur les autres, qui le fera ?

ENCATC: How did you go about getting start-up funds and how did you use them to get your business up and running?

Hanaë Grimal: To start our business, we invested less than 4,000 euros! We collected the sum by borrowing from our relatives, in order to buy a small camera and two or three technical accessories... For the rest, it is obvious that we worked with our personal equipment, often setting up shop in each other's living rooms. It is with this more or less basic material that we realized our first film, which we still look upon with pride! Since then, we have borrowed more money from an accompanying structure, Burgundy Active, and our bank, to finance our ambitious investment policy. Today, our offices include our recording studio, our calibration bench and our stock of filming equipment: a real cave of Ali Baba for movie geeks! In the meantime, we have fully repaid the money that our families and friends had initially loaned us ...

ENCATC : Comment avez-vous obtenu des fonds de démarrage et comment les avez-vous utilisés pour lancer votre entreprise ?

Hanaë Grimal : *Pour démarrer notre activité, nous avons investi moins de 4000 euros ! Nous avons réuni la somme en empruntant à nos proches, afin d'acheter une petite caméra et deux ou trois accessoires techniques... Pour le reste, il est évident que nous travaillions avec notre matériel personnel, dans le salon des uns et des autres. C'est avec ce matériel plus ou moins sommaire que nous avons réalisé notre premier film, que nous regardons encore maintenant avec fierté ! Depuis, nous avons emprunté des sommes plus importantes auprès d'une structure d'accompagnement, Bourgogne Active, et de notre établissement bancaire, afin de financer notre ambitieuse politique d'investissement. Aujourd'hui, nos bureaux abritent notamment notre studio d'enregistrement, notre banc d'étalonnage et notre stock de matériel de tournage : une vraie caverne d'Ali Baba pour geeks du cinéma ! Je précise qu'entre temps, nous avons entièrement remboursé l'argent que nos familles et nos amis nous avaient prêté...*

ENCATC: What advice would you give to students or early career professionals looking to start their own business or project?

Hanaë Grimal: I can only speak of what has succeeded for us: to build a company, have a solid foundation, we took our time. Maybe others would have gone faster, reached higher... But we, in our way of doing, was the one that resembles us and reveals our potential.

ENCATC: Quels conseils donneriez-vous aux étudiants ou aux jeunes professionnels qui cherchent à démarrer leur propre entreprise ou projet ?

Hanaë Grimal : *Je ne peux parler que de ce qui nous a réussi : pour construire une entreprise, solide sur ses appuis, nous avons pris notre temps. Peut-être que d'autres seraient allés plus vite, plus haut... Mais nous, c'est notre façon de faire, celle qui nous ressemble et révèle notre potentiel.*

ENCATC: What keeps you motivated and going?

Hanaë Grimal: Many things motivate me daily to continue this adventure: for example, talking with my colleagues about the issues of the day or Judd Apatow's latest comedy. Take hours to imagine

improbable scenarios, from which always springs a good idea. But what particularly excites me is that every morning, I am conscious of bringing another new stone building on our creation.

ENCATC : Qu'est-ce qui vous motive et vous fait aller de l'avant ?

Hanaë Grimal : *Beaucoup de choses me motivent quotidiennement pour continuer l'aventure : par exemple, échanger avec mes collègues sur la problématique du jour ou sur la dernière comédie de Judd Apatow. Prendre des heures à imaginer des scénarios improbables, d'où jaillit toujours une bonne idée. Mais ce qui m'anime particulièrement, c'est que chaque matin, j'ai conscience d'apporter une nouvelle pierre à l'édifice.*



About CHapet Hill

CHapet Hill is an independent audiovisual advertising agency founded in Dijon, France in 2010.

It designs and produces films that are moving, sometimes impertinent, always creative. It prides itself on listening to companies and helping them achieve their goals and challenges they face. The agency's investment always rises to meet the trust given and its enthusiasm, on every project, is perfectly intact.



<http://www.chapethill.com/>

Julie Boiveau — “Julie Boiveau”

Today, I work as a graphic facilitator. My work consists of taking part in collective activities (conferences or meetings) and visually translating the ideas and remarks that are exchanged between the participants. I materialise the ideas on big formats (frescos or boards), made in real time and visible for the participants.

Julie Boiveau : J'ai démarré mon activité en 2014, après avoir travaillé en tant que salariée pendant plusieurs années.

J'exerce aujourd'hui le métier de facilitatrice graphique. Mon travail consiste à intervenir durant des temps collectifs (conférences ou réunions) et à traduire visuellement les idées et les propos qui sont échangés entre les participants. Je matérialise les idées sur des grands supports (fresques ou panneaux), construits en temps réel et visibles par les participants.

L'objectif de la discipline est de garder une trace visuelle des échanges et des idées. Cela permet aussi de capter l'attention des participants de façon plus forte durant une conférence par exemple. Le fait de matérialiser les propos permet aussi une meilleure compréhension entre les individus.

ENCATC: Where do you get your creativity from?

Julie Boiveau: I don't know where it comes from (not from my initial training, that's for sure!), it's more a personal disposition that I developed throughout the years by complementary practices in my professional activity that enrich my work: diverse and varied training, intuitive dance, painting, reading, nature, etc... Creativity comes also, I think, when we find pleasure in our work and when the subjects touch us particularly or interest us.

ENCATC: D'où vient votre créativité?

Julie Boiveau: Je ne sais pas d'où ça vient (pas de ma formation initiale c'est sûr!), c'est plutôt une fibre personnelle que je développe au fur et à mesure des années par des pratiques complémentaires à mon activité professionnelle qui viennent enrichir mon travail : formations diverses et variées, danse intuitive, peinture, lecture, nature, etc... La créativité vient aussi je pense quand on prend du plaisir à travailler, lorsque les sujets nous touchent particulièrement ou nous intéressent.

ENCATC: Can you explain your educational background and share your professional experience in your field?

Julie Boiveau: I got my Masters in Planning and Territorial Sustainable Development. Then I worked for several years in that field. I helped create planning schemes for "soft transport methods" like bikes and sidewalks. I also worked on visit studies.

During my last job, I was in charge of defining a more global territorial strategy in collaboration with representatives and businesses related to the territory. It's there that I met teams of employees trained in collective intelligence tools. That was a true discovery for me! It was during this time that I discovered the use of creative visual tools for working with groups.





I also started to train in Germany and France and practiced graphic facilitation in my professional field.

After that experience, I decided to start my own graphic facilitation startup. I met businesses and associations for whom I started visually presenting meetings and conferences and that is what allowed me to start my business.

ENCATC : Pouvez-vous expliquer votre parcours scolaires et partager avec nous votre expérience professionnelle dans votre domaine ?

Julie Boiveau : Je suis diplômée d'un Master en Aménagement et Développement Durable des Territoires. J'ai ensuite travaillé plusieurs années dans ce domaine. J'ai contribué à la réalisation de schémas d'aménagement pour les «modes de transports doux» comme le vélo et la marche à pied. J'ai aussi travaillé sur des études de fréquentation.

Lors de mon dernier emploi, j'étais en charge de définir une stratégie territoriale plus globale en faisant collaborer les élus et les entreprises du territoire concerné. C'est là que j'ai rencontré une équipe de salariés formés aux outils de l'intelligence collective. Une vraie découverte pour moi à ce moment là ! C'est au cours de cette période que j'ai découvert la puissance des outils visuels pour faire travailler les groupes.

J'ai alors commencé à me former en Allemagne et en France et à pratiquer la facilitation graphique dans mon milieu professionnel.

Suite à cette expérience, j'ai décidé de lancer mon activité en facilitation graphique. J'ai rencontré des entreprises et des associations pour qui j'ai commencé à traduire visuellement des réunions et des conférences et c'est cela qui m'a permis de me lancer.

ENCATC: What qualities and skills do you have that help you manage your company?

Julie Boiveau: Managing a company, even a small one, demands a lot of rigor. You have to be able to manage your time, your priorities, but it's probably the administrative aspect that demands the most rigor: organising papers, following the cost estimates and receipts, regulatory norms, handling the question of administrative statutes... Once this rigorous part calms, I think it's important to know how to listen to yourself, to save some time for yourself to relax and also to go after the projects that really interest you, the ones that call to you inside.

ENCATC: Quelles sont les qualités et compétences que vous avez qui aident à gérer votre entreprise ?

Julie Boiveau: Gérer une entreprise, même petite, demande beaucoup de rigueur. Il faut être capable d'organiser son temps, de gérer les priorités, mais c'est probablement l'aspect administratif qui demande le plus de rigueur : organiser les papiers, suivre les devis et factures, les normes réglementaires, gérer la question des statuts administratifs... Une fois cette base rigoureuse posée,



il me semble important de savoir s'écouter, de garder des temps ressources pour soi et aussi d'aller vers les projets qui nous font vraiment envie, ceux qui nous appellent de l'intérieur.

ENCATC: What would you have liked to know before starting your company?

Julie Boiveau: Before starting my own, I thought I would never be able to run a company before the age of 50... I had the impression that only people who were outside the norms could do that.

But no, it is totally possible to start a company before 30!

ENCATC: Qu'auriez-vous voulu savoir avant de lancer votre entreprise ?

Julie Boiveau: Avant de me lancer, je ne pensais pas être capable de gérer une entreprise avant d'avoir 50 ans... J'avais l'impression que seules de personnes hors-normes pouvaient faire cela.

Mais non, c'est tout à fait possible de lancer son entreprise avant 30 ans !

ENCATC: How did you obtain funds at the beginning and how have you used them to get your company going?

Julie Boiveau: I didn't benefit from funding. Luckily, I do something that does not demand much

investment: felt pens, paper or cardboard. Nothing inaccessible.

On the other hand, I spent a lot of time meeting people, key players of the field, companies and associations in order to get people to know my practice. It was because of this network that I got to develop my startup.

ENCATC: Comment avez-vous obtenu des fonds de démarrage et comment les avez-vous utilisés pour mettre votre entreprise sur les rails ?

Julie Boiveau: Je n'ai bénéficié d'aucun fonds de démarrage. J'ai la chance de faire une activité qui demande peu d'investissements : des feutres et des feuilles ou des cartons-plumes. Ce n'est rien d'inaccessible.

J'ai en revanche passé beaucoup de temps à rencontrer des personnes, des acteurs clés sur la région, des entreprises et des associations afin de faire connaître mon activité. C'est par la force de ce réseau que je suis ensuite parvenue à développer mon activité.

ENCATC: What's the biggest difficulty that you've encountered?

Julie Boiveau: To me, the administrative and legal aspect is the most prickly matter of entrepreneurship. It is not always simple to get back the different stakeholders who can consult with us, or the ones that we need to address ourselves. The acronyms sometimes leave us undecided: RSI, RAM, URSSAF, FIF PL, etc. Choosing an appropriate legal status also isn't a small matter...

On another hand, one of the difficulties to overcome was accepting the uncertainty and the lack of visibility of the practice. In effect, graphic facilitation is a field that functions in short term, and we generally have weak visibility in the months to come. I learn to keep confident and serene all year long!

ENCATC: Quelle est la plus grande difficulté que vous avez rencontrée ?

Julie Boiveau: L'aspect administratif et juridique est à mon sens la question la plus épineuse de l'entrepreneuriat. Il n'est pas toujours simple de s'y retrouver les différents acteurs qui peuvent nous conseiller, ou ceux à qui nous devons nous adresser. Les sigles nous laissent parfois songeurs : RSI, RAM,

URSSAF, FIF PL, etc. Le choix d'un statut juridique adapté n'est pas non plus une mince affaire...

Sur un autre plan, une des difficultés à surmonter à été d'accepter l'incertitude et le manque de visibilité de l'activité. En effet, la facilitation graphique est un domaine qui fonctionne souvent à court terme, et nous avons en general une visibilité très faible sur les mois à venir. J'apprends à garder confiance et sérénité tout au long de l'année !

ENCATC: What advice would you give to students or young professionals that want to start their own company or project?

Julie Boiveau: The advice I would give would be to start small, to test the product or service in the market and to repeat after the first tests (the one that certain people call the Minimum Viable Product—MVP). If the first tests show an excess of your goal, it's worth persevering, making your service or product better and pursuing the venture. And eventually finding investors after, but above all not before having tested the market first.

ENCATC: Quels conseils donneriez-vous aux étudiants ou aux jeunes professionnels qui cherchent à démarrer leur propre entreprise ou projet?

Julie Boiveau: Le conseil que je donnerais serait de commencer petit, de tester le produit ou service sur le marché et d'itérer à partir des premiers tests (ce que certains appellent le Minimum Viable Product—MVP). Si les premiers tests démontrent un engouement de votre cible, cela vaut la peine de persévérer, d'améliorer le produit ou le service et de poursuivre l'aventure. Et éventuellement de chercher des investisseurs par la suite, mais surtout pas avant d'avoir testé le marché au préalable.

ENCATC: What keeps you motivated and going?

Julie Boiveau: What motivates me everyday is freedom! Freedom to manage my time, to choose the projects that we work on, to choose the challenges that we want to relieve, the freedom to collaborate with extremely gifted partners with whom we can co-construct top projects!

The ability to constantly learn is also an essential motivator for me: I learn during each mission I take part in, whatever it's about: the presented content, the structure's internal organisation, the work atmosphere, current projects or in meeting other people as well of course!

ENCATC: Qu'est-ce que vous motive et vous fait aller de l'avant ?

Julie Boiveau: Ce qui me motive au quotidien, c'est la liberté ! Liberté de gérer son emploi du temps, de choisir les projets sur lesquels on travaille, de choisir les challenges que l'on veut relever, la liberté de collaborer avec des partenaires extrêmement doués avec qui on peut co-construire des projets top !

Le fait d'apprendre sans cesse est également un moteur essentiel pour moi : j'apprends au cours de chaque mission sur laquelle j'interviens, ce que soit sur le contenu présenté, sur l'organisation interne de la structure, l'environnement de travail, sur les projets en cours et dans les rencontres humaines aussi bien sûr !



About Julie Boiveau:

Stemming from a professional education and graduating with a Master in Planning and Territorial Sustainable Development, Julie Boiveau then specialised in graphic facilitation.

As a consultant, Julie Boiveau first consulted collectives for planning schemes and varied transports. Then, within a local development association, she led a global project for territorial development: from the conception of collective activities to graphic facilitation.

Constantly working in a multi-partnership mode, Julie developed graphic facilitation in order to bring visual tools to work groups to facilitate understanding of ideas between the individuals.

A truly collaborative tool, graphic facilitation allows efficiency to increase in the workplace. It reinforces creativity and individual involvement in the group to create concrete achievements.



<http://julieboiveau.com>



[@JulieBoiveau](https://twitter.com/JulieBoiveau)

FRANCE

Anne Giraud—La Petite Idée

ENCATC sat down with Anne Giraud, a young and innovative French entrepreneur to learn about how she created her company La Petite Idée, the challenges she has faced, and lessons learned. We also heard how her collaboration with ENCATC helped to expand her professional profile to a European level.

L'ENCATC a rencontré Anne Giraud, une jeune entrepreneuse française innovante, pour en apprendre plus sur la façon dont elle a créé son entreprise La petite idée, comment elle a relevé les défis qui lui faisaient face et quelles leçons elle en a tiré. Elle nous a également expliqué comment sa collaboration avec l'ENCATC l'avait aidée à donner à son profil professionnel une envergure européenne.



ENCATC: Once you had the idea to launch your company *La petite idée*, how did you go into action to make it a reality?

Anne Giraud: I was still working as a designer when I was first approached to become Creativity Management adviser, initially on an ad hoc basis, then more regularly. In order to obtain a permanent legal status for my new professional orientation and invoice my services, I decided to set up my own occupational structure. To knowingly make a choice, I carefully listened to different opinions about the various legal status available, with their advantages and inconveniences. I finally went for "Coopérative d'Activités et d'Emplois" (CAE), which is quite popular among individual entrepreneurs in Nantes, France. I'm

currently under the still little-known legal status of "entrepreneur-employee".

ENCATC: *Une fois l'idée trouvée, comment l'avez-vous concrétisée ?*

Anne Giraud: *J'étais encore designer quand j'ai commencé à être sollicitée comme conseillère en management de la créativité, d'abord ponctuellement, puis plus régulièrement. C'est donc la nécessité d'avoir un statut juridique pérenne pour accueillir ma nouvelle activité et facturer mes prestations qui m'a poussé à monter ma propre structure. J'ai alors pris plusieurs avis concernant les différents statuts existants, avec leurs avantages et*

leurs inconvénients, afin de faire mon choix en connaissance de cause. Je me suis finalement dirigée vers une « Coopérative d'Activités et d'Emplois » (CAE) qui accueille et accompagne de nombreux entrepreneurs individuels sur la région nantaise. J'ai actuellement le statut – encore très peu connu – « d'entrepreneur-salarié ».

ENCATC: How did you go about getting startup funds and how did you use them? What has been the most unexpected challenge you have faced?

Anne Giraud: The first months, I spent a lot of time meeting network heads and local authorities whose policy lines seemed to match my development axis. I wished to make my field of business more visible and obtain information about the financial support young project promoters could receive. My potential investors found the project to be "original", "interesting", but I was always too young, too qualified, not specialized enough... in order to fit the mould. I now know that this is often the case when you promote new and innovative practices. Instead of losing courage, I preferred to start my business with my own resources: my ideas, my motivation, my expertise and an office I set up in my living room. The rest followed!

It is also true that, even though I had ten years of professional experience, this was my first involvement as an independent entrepreneur. In retrospect, I think I was still lacking the good reflexes and arguments in order to efficiently valorise my project in the eyes of decision makers.

ENCATC: Comment avez-vous obtenu les fonds pour lancer votre entreprise et à quoi les avez-vous consacrés ? Quel a été le défi auquel vous vous attendiez le moins ?

Anne Giraud: Les premiers mois, j'ai passé beaucoup de temps à rencontrer des têtes de réseau et des référents des collectivités territoriales, dont les axes politiques me semblaient correspondre à mes axes de développement. Je souhaitais faire connaître mon activité, et obtenir des informations sur les accompagnements financiers et logistiques possibles pour les jeunes porteurs de projet. Mes interlocuteurs trouvaient le projet « original », « intéressant », mais j'étais toujours trop jeune, trop diplômée, pas assez spécialisée... pour rentrer dans les bonnes cases. Je sais maintenant que c'est souvent le cas quand on porte des pratiques nouvelles et innovantes. Plutôt que de me décourager, j'ai préféré démarrer mon

activité avec mes propres ressources : mes idées, ma motivation, mon savoir-faire, et un bureau aménagé dans mon salon. Le reste a suivi !

Il est également vrai que, malgré dix ans d'expériences professionnelles, c'était ma première expérience en tant qu'entrepreneur indépendant. Avec le recul, je pense que je ne maîtrisais pas encore les bons réflexes et les bons arguments pour valoriser au mieux mon projet auprès des décideurs.

ENCATC: What was your experience working with ENCATC and preparing an ENCATC Breakfast training for our European audience?

I had the pleasure to meet GiannaLia Cogliandro Beyens almost a year ago, thanks to an acquaintance we share. We talked about creativity applied to professional life and she proposed me to lead an "ENCATC Breakfast" in Brussels, in May 2015.

The ENCATC Breakfast is a training series designed for busy professionals and uses a to-the-point and concentrated method to deliver knowledge and new skills. The work I do fits perfectly with the model ENCATC proposed. I was delighted to lead a creative session in this framework on "Brainstorming Express" to teach participants how to effectively generate new ideas to find solutions in the workplace. I introduced proper tools, how to prepare a solid brainstorming framework, how to choose the right cast of participants, and how to avoid many pit falls. Brainstorming seems like an easy concept – it's a well-known creative tool, but few use it optimally! There are many layers and key steps to follow in order to free the mind and let the creative juices and ideas flow! It is a real skill to learn how to prepare, animate and evaluate a successful brainstorming meeting.

I was also excited to do this training because it was an opportunity to reach a wider European and international audience. At this session there were participants from Belgium, France, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, the United States and Argentina! Not only was I able to share my knowledge and expertise, but I too gained new insights from the participants from different cultural backgrounds through the convivial and constructive exchanges. I think as an entrepreneur you always need to be open, seize opportunities to grow your audience, but also learn from them and each experience!

ENCATC: Quelle a été votre expérience de collaboration avec l'ENCATC et de préparation de la formation pour notre audience européenne.

Anne Giraud: J'ai eu le plaisir de rencontrer GiannaLia Cogliandro Beyens il y a presque un an, grâce à une connaissance en commun. Nous avons échangé sur la créativité appliquée à la vie professionnelle, et elle m'a proposé d'intervenir dans le cadre d'un « ENCATC Breakfast » à Bruxelles, en mai 2015.

Les « ENCATC Breakfast » consistent en des formations conçues pour les professionnels disposant de peu de temps. Elles s'organisent selon une méthode de partage des connaissances et compétences précise et concentrée. Mon travail complète parfaitement le modèle proposé par l'ENCATC. J'étais ravie d'animer une séance créative dans ce cadre, sur le sujet « Brainstorming Express », pour apprendre aux participants comment développer de façon efficace de nouvelles idées face aux problèmes rencontrés au travail. J'ai présenté les outils adaptés, expliqué comment bien préparer une session de brainstorming, comment choisir les bons participants et comment éviter de nombreux pièges. Le brainstorming peut sembler simple – c'est un outil de créativité bien connu, mais peu l'utilisent de manière optimale ! Il y a de nombreuses étapes à suivre avant de libérer l'esprit et trouver l'inspiration ! C'est en effet une compétence à part entière que d'être capable de préparer, animer et évaluer une séance réussie de brainstorming.

Participer à cette formation m'a également permis de toucher une audience européenne et internationale plus large. Lors de cette session, j'ai rencontré des participants de Belgique, de France, de Slovaquie, du Royaume-Uni, des États-Unis et d'Argentine ! C'était l'occasion pour moi non seulement de partager mes connaissances et mon expertise, mais aussi de bénéficier du regard de participants issus de

différents milieux culturels, à travers des échanges conviviaux et constructifs. Je crois sincèrement qu'en tant qu'entrepreneur, on se doit de rester toujours ouvert, de saisir les occasions de toucher une audience plus large, mais aussi d'apprendre de chaque rencontre et chaque expérience.

ENCATC: What was the most difficult challenge to starting your own business and how did you overcome it?

The biggest challenge I had to face when I began was to set up an innovative activity in a very short period of time. Indeed, I needed to make money from my services within six months without knowing much about the daily reality and the priorities of an independent entrepreneur. I had to quickly ask myself the essential questions and rapidly construct an action plan including several options depending of what was working and what was not. This constraint ended up being a major asset because it prompted me to be versatile, develop solutions in collaboration with my professional network and swiftly experiment them.

My business is now more structured. I develop two main axes:

- Education and training to creative tools, "design thinking" and social innovation. The best way of spreading more creative and collaborative practices in professional structures is to experiment with them and test them in a framework without stakes.
- Accompanying businesses and organisations in their efforts for innovation and change. In this context, creative tools are particularly efficient in helping our team to think outside the box, in collaborating differently, in daring to be



creative in a framework that can be restricting (lack of time, resources...). The advantage of this methodology and its "creative toolbox" is also that it adapts to every activity sector and team configuration.

ENCATC: Quelle a été la plus grande difficulté rencontrée lorsque vous avez lancé votre entreprise et comment l'avez-vous surmontée ?

Le plus grand challenge à relever à mes débuts, c'était de réussir à équilibrer une activité innovante en un temps record. En effet, je disposais de seulement 6 mois pour commencer à vivre de mes prestations, sans savoir grand-chose de la réalité quotidienne et des priorités d'un entrepreneur indépendant. J'ai donc été obligée de me poser les questions essentielles très rapidement, et de construire un plan d'action express avec différentes options en fonction de ce qui marchait ou pas. Cette contrainte a finalement été un atout, puisqu'elle m'a incité à être polyvalente, à expérimenter rapidement des solutions et à les co-construire avec mon réseau professionnel.

Maintenant, mon activité est plus structurée. Je développe 2 axes principaux :

- *L'enseignement / la formation aux outils de la créativité, au « design thinking » et à l'innovation sociale. La meilleure manière d'essaimer des pratiques plus créatives et collaboratives dans les structures professionnelles est de leur permettre de les expérimenter et de les tester dans un cadre bienveillant et sans enjeu.*
- *L'accompagnement d'entreprises et organisations dans leurs démarches d'innovation et de changement. Dans ce contexte, les outils de la créativité sont particulièrement efficaces pour aider les équipes à penser « outside the box », à collaborer autrement, à oser être créatifs dans un cadre parfois contraignant (manque de temps, de moyens, de ressources...). L'avantage de cette méthodologie associée à sa « boîte à outils créative », c'est aussi qu'elle s'adapte à tout secteur d'activité et toute configuration d'équipe.*

ENCATC: What had you wished you had known before you started your business?

I would have liked to have been told not to worry,

that being an independent entrepreneur is something you learn. At the beginning, everything was new and complex to me. I was comfortable with my knowledge and experience working with clients. What I had to learn was how to do everything that goes around it: efficient prospecting, building a coherent offer, setting appropriate pricing, handling communication... With time, and the sound advice of people I trust, I learned a lot and I am now able to manage more efficiently the multiple tasks a self-employed person has to face on a daily basis.



About La Petite Idée:

At the beginning of 2014, given the deep and cross-disciplinary experience and encouraged by the demands of several collaborators, Anne Giraud created "La Petite Idée". She left her job as an integrated designer to become creative potential facilitator.

Today as a consultant in creativity management, she helps companies, as well as organisations, in the development of their creative approach, should it be a one-time or repeated support. The method she adopts combines different tools for idea generation, allows to bring about a large number of new proposals within a very short timeframe, but also makes it possible to go from ideas to practical solutions that suit the matter at hand. La Petite Idée is assisted in its development by l'Ouvre-Boîtes 44, an activity and employment cooperative based in Nantes, France.

Since 2010, Anne has been speaking in various art academies in Nantes (ENSA, ESBA, École de design, LISAA) or in higher education institutions (IPSA of Angers), addressing, among others, the theme "When design meets social and solidarity economy".

As creativity is a process that you have to cultivate on a daily basis, Anne Giraud continues to design unique objects and lead workshops, mainly according to the upcycling* principles.



Learn more and read the description of *La petite idée* in French: www.lapetiteidee.fr

*The process of transforming the materials recovered - or become free products use - in new functional objects better and / or high aesthetic demands .



ENCATC: Qu'auriez-vous aimé savoir avant de lancer votre entreprise ?

Anne Giraud: J'aurais aimé qu'on me dise : « Pas d'inquiétude, être entrepreneur indépendant, ça s'apprend ! » Au début, tout me paraissait nouveau, complexe, et je ne voyais pas comment tout mener de front en plus de mes interventions : prospecter efficacement, construire une offre cohérente, établir des tarifications adaptées, gérer ma communication... Avec le temps, et les conseils avisés d'un réseau de personnes de confiance, j'ai beaucoup appris, et maintenant je gère bien mieux les multiples tâches que sous-entend le quotidien d'un indépendant.

ENCATC: What advice would you give to students/young graduates looking to start their own business?

Giving advice would be a bit pretentious, I don't have a 30-year experience. But here are a few tips and tricks that helped me when I started my professional life:

- Trusting the collective intelligence: "If you go faster on your own, we go further together", as the African proverb puts it.
- Building and taking care of a professional network you can trust: former students, internship mentors, people that left an impression on you may become your reference tomorrow. Don't hesitate to give your contact information.
- Take every opportunity you are given and do the same to other when you have the chance.
- Break down different parts of your project to test them quickly with final users before testing the whole project. Better to know as soon as possible what works and what does not, instead of waiting to have the "perfect project".

ENCATC: Quels conseils donneriez-vous aux étudiants ou jeunes diplômés désireux de lancer leur propre entreprise ?

Anne Giraud: Donner des conseils serait prétentieux, je n'ai pas 30 ans d'expérience. Mais voici quelques trucs et astuces qui m'ont servi depuis le début de ma vie professionnelle :

- Faire confiance à l'intelligence collective : « Si tout seul on va plus vite, ensemble on va plus loin », comme dit ce proverbe africain.
- Construire un réseau professionnel bienveillant et en prendre bien soin : Les anciens étudiants, maîtres de stage, intervenants qui vous ont marqué sont peut-être vos prescripteurs de demain. Osez donner votre contact.
- Saisir avec enthousiasme les opportunités qu'on nous tend, et rendre la pareille à d'autres quand on en a l'occasion.
- Expérimenter rapidement en version « prototype » tout ou partie de son projet auprès des utilisateurs finaux. Autant savoir dès que possible ce qui fonctionne ou pas au lieu d'attendre de créer « le projet parfait ».

ENCATC: What keeps you motivated and going?

I chose my occupation and the way I do it, how could I not be enthusiastic? If one day I don't have any more pleasure in being a facilitator and adviser in Creativity Management, or if there is no demand for it on the job market, I will move on to something else.

As a daily routine, I continuously work on improving what can be improved, but I also take joy in every smile I get from a workshop's participant, in every new collaboration with someone I esteem, and every time I'm thanked by a satisfied client.

ENCATC: Qu'est-ce qui vous motive et vous fait avancer ?

Anne Giraud: J'ai choisi mon métier et la façon dont je le pratique, comment ne pas être enthousiaste ? Si un jour je ne prends plus de plaisir à être facilitatrice et consultante en management de la créativité, ou s'il n'y a plus de place pour cette pratique sur le marché du travail, je passerai à autre chose.

Au quotidien, je travaille en continu à améliorer ce qui doit l'être, mais je me nourris aussi de chaque sourire de participant à la fin d'un workshop, de chaque remerciement de client satisfait, de chaque nouvelle collaboration avec une personne que j'estime.

FRANCE

Juan Miño — “La Caravelle Théâtre”

ENCATC spoke with Juan Miño, founder of “La Caravelle Theatre” about his start in the theatre industry and the challenges he has faced and overcome. See how he forged his own path through self-education and determination.



ENCATC: When was “La Caravelle” launched?

Juan Miño: “La Caravelle” was created in 2014.

ENCATC : Quand est-ce que << La Caravelle >> a été lancée ?

Juan Miño : << La Caravelle >> a été lancée en 2014.

ENCATC: Can you explain your educational background and share your professional experience in theatre?

Juan Miño: I started theatre in secondary school (I took a literature course), but it took me a while to decide to do it as a career. I had other aspirations: the

military and my old career as a geo-historical professor. I had a history degree, which hasn't helped me very much!

I took some more time to grasp what my job demanded—if I even understand it now. I learned on the job thanks to artists who wanted to give me projects, even without going to school. I went directly from alexandrines to children's tales, from contemporary writing to street improv, contracted scenes and public libraries.

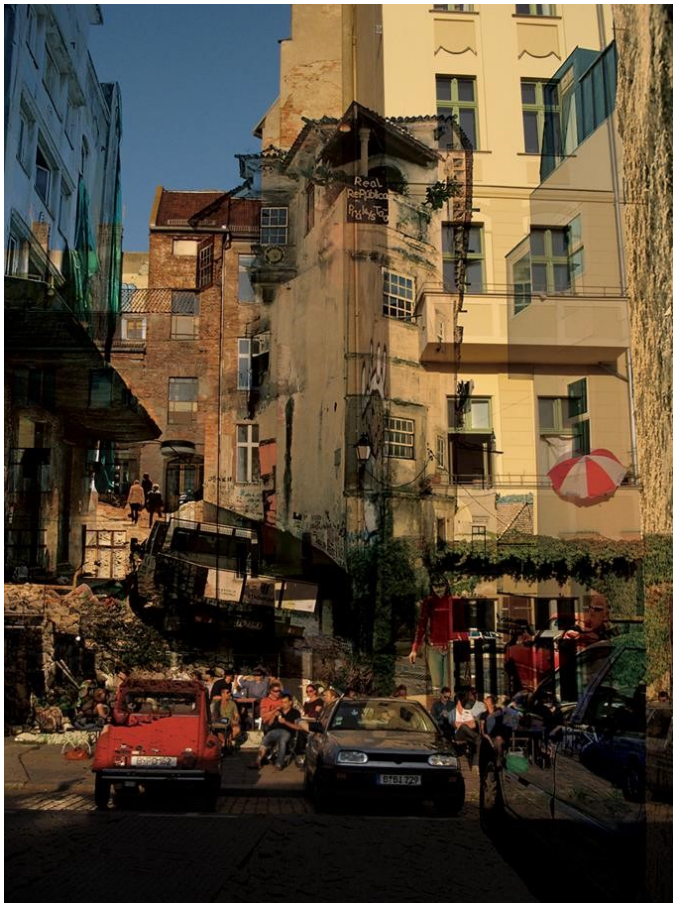
As it happens, my education is constant: it's still going, happening over time. I took singing courses, practiced guitar, learned tango and Kathak dancing, each time following my desires.

I hope that this "hunter-gatherer" side has made me an artist capable of navigating from one world to another and open to new encounters. It was with this state of mind that I integrated the Extra-Muros group in 2008, working alongside each other, and with which I have participated in four performances and several multidisciplinary events.

At that time, after several years working with them, I wanted to resume my passion for theatre by creating my own performance. I wrote *Looking for Henry Kissinger* in 2009, a play for a single actor where I played all the characters, accompanied by a musician/singer/sound creator (Benjamin Thomas). Between political satire and poetic solo, the play has been staged more than 20 times in Région Pays de Loire, on stages like TU-Nantes, le Grand T or L'Ephémère au Mans.

Encouraged by the positive reception of that first endeavour, I have since written a play for youths (*Le Prince Tataïna*, put on by la Cie le Rire du Miroir in Clisson), and my second mise-en-scène, *Les Distracts*, created in 2014 at TU-Nantes with my own company (La Caravelle Théâtre), and then a comic published in 2016. Now I'm preparing for my next work: *5 Façons de se Tenir Debout*, planned for autumn at U-Nantes and in coproduction with le Grand T.

Next to these experiences centred on contemporary writing, I've done improv theatre for twelve years and I've taught improvisation since 2008.



Alongside theatre, I've participated in several film shoots, of which the most noteworthy is *Trois Contes de Borges*, by Maxime Martinot, the first cut that was awarded at FID (Fédération Internationale de Cinéma) Marseille in 2014.

ENCATC : Pouvez-vous expliquer votre parcours scolaire et partager avec nous votre expérience professionnelle dans le domaine du théâtre ?

Juan Miño : *J'ai commencé le théâtre au lycée (je suivais un cursus littéraire), mais j'ai mis du temps à me décider à en faire mon métier. J'avais d'autres aspirations : le militantisme et ma vieille vocation de professeur d'histoire-géo. Je possède un DEUG d'Histoire (Bac +2), qui ne m'a pas beaucoup servi !*

J'ai pris plus de temps encore pour saisir ce que ce métier nous demande—si toutefois je l'ai saisi aujourd'hui. Je me suis formé sur le tas, grâce à des artistes qui ont bien voulu me proposer des projets, sans passer par une école. Je suis passé sans transitions des alexandrins au conte jeune public, des écritures contemporaines à l'impro en passant par la rue, les scènes conventionnées et les bibliothèques municipales.

Ma formation, pour le coup, est cohérente : elle est en cours, se fait au fil du temps. J'ai pris des cours de chant, pratique la guitare, je me suis formé au tango et à la danse kathak, à chaque fois en suivant mes désirs.

J'espère que ce côté "chasseur-cueilleur" a fait de moi un artiste capable de naviguer d'un univers à l'autre et ouvert aux rencontres. C'est dans cet esprit que j'ai intégré en 2008 le collectif Extra-Muros, au fonctionnement horizontal, et avec lequel j'ai participé depuis à quatre spectacles et plusieurs événements pluridisciplinaires.

*A cette période, après plusieurs années à travailler pour d'autres, j'ai voulu résumer mes envies de théâtre en créant mon propre spectacle. J'ai écrit en 2009 *Looking for Henry Kissinger*, une pièce pour un seul comédien où je jouais tous les personnages, accompagné par un musicien/chanteur/créateur sonore (Benjamin Thomas). Entre satire politique et solo poétique, la pièce a été jouée plus d'une vingtaine de fois en Région Pays de Loire, sur des scènes comme le TU-Nantes, le Grand T ou l'Ephémère au Mans.*

*Encouragé par le bon accueil de cette première tentative, j'ai depuis écrit une pièce jeune public (*Le Prince Tataïna*, créée par la Cie le Rire du Miroir à Clisson), ma deuxième mise en scène, *Les Distracts*,*

créée en 2014 au TU-Nantes avec ma propre compagnie (La Caravelle Théâtre) ; puis une bande-dessinée publiée en 2016. Je travaille aujourd'hui à la préparation de ma prochaine création : 5 Façons de se Tenir Debout, prévue pour l'automne au TU-Nantes et en co-production avec le Grand T.

A côté de ces expériences très axées sur les écritures contemporaines, je pratique le théâtre d'impro depuis douze ans et je forme des improvisateurs depuis 2008.

Parallèlement au théâtre j'ai participé à plusieurs tournages, dont le plus marquant est Trois Contes de Borges, de Maxime Martinot, premier long qui a été primé au FID de Marseille 2014.

ENCATC: What are the qualities and competences that you have that help you manage your company?

Juan Miño: I would say the first competence necessary is the ability to put yourself in the shoes of the people you direct. I don't always manage it, but I try hard to understand my team members' points of view because beyond just good direction, they also need to be recognised for their value and their contribution (like me!). I think it's also necessary to not be too anxious to get your dream result, but more to try and imagine the steps of the process, in order to not add any more pressure to that which already weighs on every creation.

ENCATC : Quelles sont les qualités et compétences que vous avez qui vous aident à gérer votre groupe ?

Juan Miño : Je dirais que la première compétence nécessaire est la capacité à se mettre à la place des gens que l'on dirige. Je n'y arrive pas toujours, mais je m'efforce de comprendre les points de vue des membres de mon équipe, car au-delà d'une bonne direction, ils ont aussi besoin d'être reconnus dans



leur valeur et leur contribution (comme moi !). Il faut aussi, je pense ne pas être trop pressé d'obtenir le résultat dont on rêve, mais plutôt essayer d'imaginer les étapes du processus, pour ne pas ajouter une pression supplémentaire à celle qui pèse déjà sur toute création.

ENCATC: What would you have liked to know before starting your theatre group?

Juan Miño: Loads of things! There are so many abilities that I still don't have (I am not at all at ease with working on costumes, or with video insertion in a performance, for example). I imagine that it is by committing errors that we learn, but I am still discovering myself, my needs in my work, time management and group management. If I had to name one thing, it would be a better understanding of how my professional field functions. I find that understanding the professional field and its functions is something that could be better transmitted to the young people that come into the industry. And so it seems difficult to exist within the networks when we often seek the wrong people (we immediately write to national stages while those aren't the best contacts for when we start).

ENCATC : Qu'auriez-vous voulu savoir avant de lancer votre groupe ?

Juan Miño : Un tas de choses ! Il y a plein de compétences qui me manquent encore (je ne suis pas du tout à l'aise avec le travail des costumes, ou avec l'insertion de la vidéo dans un spectacle, par exemple). J'imagine que c'est en commettant des erreurs qu'on apprend, mais j'en suis encore à me découvrir moi-même, mes besoins dans le travail, la gestion du temps, du groupe. S'il fallait nommer une chose, ce serait une meilleure connaissance de la façon dont fonctionne mon milieu professionnel. Je trouve la connaissance du milieu professionnel, de

son fonctionnement, est quelque chose qui pourrait être mieux transmis aux jeunes qui arrivent. Du coup, il paraît très difficile d'exister dans le réseau, alors que souvent on s'adresse aux mauvaises personnes (on écrit tout de suite aux scènes nationales etc, alors que ce ne sont pas les meilleurs interlocuteurs quand on commence).

ENCATC: How did you get funding and how did you use it to start your theatre company?

Juan Miño: I benefited from the support of TU, a conventional stage. In France, it's the first condition for financing a performance: public aid comes when the performance has concrete life perspectives. All the money that we benefited from then went into our first creation, *Les Distracts*.

ENCATC : Comment avez-vous obtenu des fonds de démarrage et comment les avez-vous utilisés pour mettre votre groupe du théâtre sur les rails ?

Juan Miño : J'ai bénéficié du soutien du TU, une scène conventionnée. En France, c'est la condition première pour ensuite financer un spectacle : les aides publiques viennent quand le spectacle a des perspectives de vie concrètes. Tous l'argent dont nous avons bénéficié alors est allé dans notre première création, qui s'appelait *Les Distracts*.

ENCATC: What is the greatest difficulty that you have encountered?

Juan Miño: Without a doubt having been a little presumptuous when writing my first play: I believed I knew things that I didn't know, and we were a little stuck because of that!

ENCATC : Quelle est la plus grande difficulté que vous avez rencontrée ?

Juan Miño : Sans doute d'avoir été un peu présomptueux lors de l'écriture de ma précédente pièce : j'ai cru savoir des choses que je ne savais pas, et on s'est un peu planté à cause de ça !

ENCATC: What advice would you give to students or to young professionals who want to start their own company or project?

Juan Miño: To have a coherent project in terms of feasibility, and for which they master the essential: artistic content. It is more worth it to have something

pertinent but modest rather than being too ambitious and consequently being crushed by the weight of the project.

ENCATC : Quels conseils donneriez-vous aux étudiants ou aux jeunes professionnels qui cherchent à démarrer leur propre entreprise ou projet ?

Juan Miño : D'avoir un projet cohérent en termes de faisabilité, et dont ils maîtrisent l'essentiel : le contenu artistique. Mieux vaut quelque chose de très pertinent mais modeste, plutôt qu'être trop ambitieux et ensuite être écrasé par le poids du projet.

ENCATC: What motivates you and keeps you going?

Juan Miño: Curiosity. The need for recognition as well, without a doubt. The things I see. My happiness in doing this job. The adrenaline...

ENCATC : Qu'est-ce que vous motive et vous fait aller de l'avant ?

Juan Miño : La curiosité. Le besoin de reconnaissance, sans doute. Les choses que je vois. Le bonheur d'exercer ce métier. L'adrénaline...



About "La Caravelle Théâtre":

La Caravelle - Théâtre is a company created and directed by Juan Pablo Miño and based in Nantes.

Learn more about "La Caravelle Théâtre" by clicking on the link below:



<https://www.facebook.com/lacaravellenantes/>

GERMANY

Bryn Vertesi—The Cast

ENCATC spoke with Bryn Vertesi, founder of The Cast, which mixes serious opera singing with fun and entertainment. Discover how the project was born and how it developed!



ENCATC: What is the story behind The Cast? Why did you want to start an independent for-profit opera company?

Bryn Vertesi: At the time, I had finished my university program in music, and had been working in the professional world for a couple of years. I had just moved to Germany, and started to get my career going here - I had even landed a pretty well-known agent. But despite having career success, I found I was still unhappy.

It was confusing to me at first. I was singing some of my favourite music, like Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and Verdi's *Rigoletto*; this was my dream, wasn't it? Yet I found myself less and less inspired each day. I would arrive at the theatre, put on the costume, and get myself ready to play someone else's artistic concept. I finally realized that even though I was working, it was still only as a hired soloist, a cog in someone else's machine. And it wasn't enough to satisfy me.

So I started to look for a way to let my own creativity and musical opinions out. My husband and Cast co-founder, Campbell, and I started to throw music parties in our apartment in downtown Cologne. We would invite a mix of professionals and hobby musicians. Everyone was welcome to make music together, in a fun and welcoming party atmosphere. Each person in turn would get up and tell a story about their piece before playing it. We laughed so much, but we also cried, and shared artistic ideas. What started off with 8 people around my living room quickly grew to 30 and more – way too many for our cramped apartment! We had so much fun sharing classical music in a relaxed, party atmosphere, and people wanted more. Finally Campbell and I turned to each other and said, why don't we do this in theatres? Why not share this with an audience? That idea became The Cast.

ENCATC: How are you working to inspire a much broader audience outside of the traditional classical concert venues and pushes the limits of traditional concert programming?

Bryn Vertesi: The Cast rejects the formality and etiquette that people expect from a classical concert. We try to take inspiration from other genres, like rock, jazz and indie pop music. The audience wears jeans, has a beer, and generally acts like they're at a rock concert. There's no written program, rather we introduce each piece personally. We try to make the audience comfortable enough to enjoy the music in their own way – we encourage them to clap, dance and even sing along if they feel like it.

We also try to help the audience feel connected to the performers and the pieces themselves, by talking to them about our own experiences and love for this music. We don't play a role in The Cast – we are ourselves. Allowing people to get to know us also brings the audience closer to the music, and our own inspiration.

ENCATC: What have been some recent innovative programming projects you have worked on that you are most proud of?

Bryn Vertesi: I have been involved in a few festivals and other projects, but The Cast is and has been my full-time project for the last four years. I am most proud of the work we've done there to program such a wide variety of music for people who thought they didn't like classical music.

Oftentimes when we program a classical concert, we start with thematic or historical ideas as organizing concepts. Maybe the concert is all baroque music, or all pieces to do with Spring time. The Cast tries to take a different approach. We start with the pieces that move us as individuals, or inspire us as musicians, and we try to build it into an emotional and musical flow for the audience. We build a script of group and individual text, to share the stories of how these pieces connect to us and why we feel compelled to share them. In the end, our personalities and stories become the theme, the red line that keeps the whole show together.

Of course a lot of our personal favorites also fall into the "pops" category. After all, everyone enjoys singing *Dein ist mein ganzes Herz*. But often our favorites are less known or more challenging pieces. For a while, Viktor Ullman's challenging 20th century aria *Ich bin der Tod* was the emotional high point of our show. Last year we found ourselves singing a Bach cantata

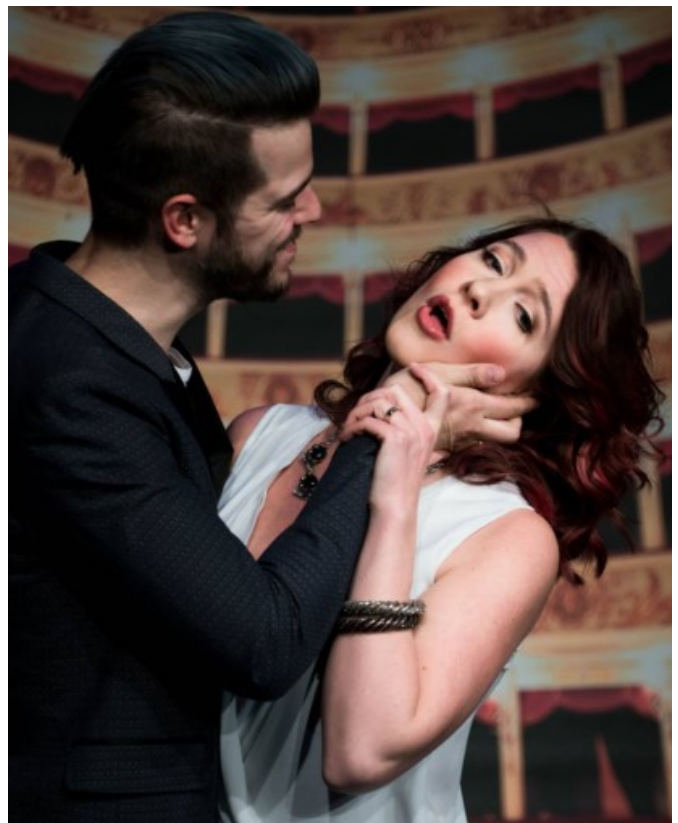
in a Bonn U-Bahn station. In our experience, audiences can latch onto almost any kind of music, as long you keep it personally connected.

ENCATC: Can you give us some background into your educational and professional experience that has led to where you are today leading The Cast?

Bryn Vertesi: I started off in a normal career for a young opera singer. I got my bachelors and masters in vocal performance from well-known universities. I auditioned and performed with local and regional opera companies. But when the recession hit in 2008, and I was forced to take other jobs to support my family.

This had a big impact on me. First of all, it was during this time that I started working in management. At first I managed an apartment complex, but soon I took a job as a project manager for a web development company. I ended up specializing in leading international teams, building complex sites for UN organizations and other large non-profits. This experience had a huge influence on the startup kind of structure we built with The Cast, and of course in the "digital first" marketing that has been so important to us.

Second, my work in management gave me financial freedom I had never had before. As a working singer, your income can vary tremendously from one year to the next, so you are always saving for the next "lean" year, taking every job that comes your way. As a





salaried manager, I suddenly had the ability to say "no" to music projects that didn't interest me, and "yes" to projects I liked that might not pay as well.

It wasn't long before I had produced my first staged opera, then my second and third. So when we had the idea for The Cast, I already had some great experience to rely on.

ENCATC: What skills or personal attributes do you think you have that have helped you to run your opera company?

Bryn Vertesi: My experience with management, particularly in working with international teams in a start-up environment, definitely helped me to start The Cast. But a lot of this has been learning on the job. This has not been an easy ride, and certainly hasn't followed according to plan the whole time! I've made some mistakes, and I've stumbled into successes. I think that's normal for a startup. At my old tech job we used to say "release early and often". It means sometimes you have to get the first step out the door and in front of the public, to move forward.

I try to keep an attitude of learning from every experience I can: successes, failures, and everything in between. We try to reflect on every experience, to draw out as many lessons and improvements as we can. The obvious lessons are artistic. The more important ones are personal.

I also have to say: I don't take "no" for an answer. The first couple of years involved a lot of cold calls,

emails, and even knocking on doors, trying to get attention. Whenever someone turned me down, I asked for recommendations of who else to contact. This was hard, slow, demoralizing work. In the end it got us several of our important big breaks.

ENCATC: What had you wished you had known before starting the company?

Bryn Vertesi: I wish that I had a better understanding of team dynamics and organizational fit. I now know and understand that casting a group like this is as serious as choosing a life partner – and involves a lot of the same factors! These are people who will share everything with you – not just the cramped tour van on the road, but also the ups and downs of start-up life. Not everybody can handle that kind of work, and it's so important to share the same compelling vision.

Communication is key. In the first few years you are constantly chasing exciting opportunities, and watching them vanish. You have to keep a balance between sharing information, and trying to avoid setting false expectations. Otherwise the meeting that you thought would drum up excitement for the project, can feel like a broken promise. Finding the right balance was a big challenge for me.

This is something that's perhaps unique to the arts. There's a kind of vulnerability and group emotional intensity that you don't get in most industries. Managing the people of The Cast has taken a lot of learning on my part, but it's also reaped some of our best rewards.

ENCATC: What has been the most difficult challenges you have encountered? How have you been able to overcome them?

Bryn Vertesi: I take on a double role with The Cast: I am the company owner and I am a performer with the group. This can get tricky with interpersonal relationships and friendships – remember that we don't take on roles on stage! We have to be ourselves, and genuinely enjoy making music together. So there are two competing requirements: as "the boss," I have to keep an emotional distance, but as a part of the team, I have to have an honest friendship with everyone in the group.

Another big challenge has been the balance between work and home life. My husband Campbell built this company with me. We had had some experience working together before, but running a company is a different story. We had to learn that every business disagreement felt like a family fight to some of our members, no matter how minor it felt to us. Very early on we had to decide which of us was "leading" each rehearsal or meeting. We defined a leadership structure between ourselves, so that business decisions were clear. We even had to schedule our business talks on the calendar, to keep us from having important business meetings in bed at 3 in the morning.

ENCATC: How did you go about getting start-up funds and how did you use them to get your company up and running?

Bryn Vertesi: The Cast was "bootstrap" funded from day one. Investing our own money in the company was both good and bad. Firstly, when it's your own money you don't have to answer to anyone but yourself. You can choose to take more risks, and be flexible when new opportunities arise, or new business developments. When a filmmaker approached us to ask about making a documentary about The Cast, we could pay for extra promotion regardless of how little money we were earning from concerts.

On the other hand, this has tied the Cast's financial fortunes to our own. Sometimes The Cast has impacted our personal finances: we've ended up footing the bill for unprofitable shows, marketing failures, and occasional last minute production emergencies. The reverse has also happened: when the German tax authority audited our personal finances, it took a lot of work to keep paying our musicians on time. I'm not sure most people would want to deal with this kind of down side.



ENCATC: What advice would you give to students or early career professionals looking to start their own business or project?

Bryn Vertesi: Do it! Starting your own project is one of the most rewarding things you can do in the arts. You get to create something that is excellent according to your vision, your standards, your idea of what defines good art. Once you've seen something from start to stage, it becomes very hard to go back to being "just" a performer.

My first piece of advice is to find a good business partner. It is incredibly hard to do this on your own, not least because it's so difficult to keep your motivation. A business partner is a must!

Secondly: don't go into business with your friends. Choose your partner and co-workers because of their strengths, not because of your previous relationship with them. A business relationship is very different from a personal one – you have to be a lot more brutally honest, for one thing. The kind of criticism and stress that is normal in a start-up is much harder to handle when you know you're wrecking a friendship at the same time. It doesn't mean that you can't develop a friendship from a business starting point. After all, I feel connected to all my colleagues in The Cast. But your existing friends are much better in the audience than in the boardroom!

ENCATC: What keeps you motivated and going?

Bryn Vertesi: Every time I step on stage, I remember why I do this: I love my job. I love this group. I am my happiest when I am performing this music with my husband and this group of people – my friends. That's why I keep doing what I do. It has been worth every struggle along the way.

ENCATC thanks The Cast and Robert Douglas for also supplying ENCATC with photos for the layout production of this interview.



About The Cast:

The Cast is genre-busting opera band pushing the boundaries of the classical music experience. A group of professional opera singers and a pianist from across the world, they bring the excitement and performance style of pop music to opera for the first time. *"We want to involve the audience and to make a concert into a shared experience,"* says soprano Bryn Vertesi. *"Our audiences don't come to sit quietly and just listen. We love it when they dance along, clap along, and even sing along with us. We want people to be as inspired as we are when we perform."*

A concert with THE CAST is a unique experience. Over and over again the audience is surprised and amazed at just how much fun and joy these musicians have with their music. In addition to their solo careers in the classical world, THE CAST makes it possible for opera to inspire a much broader audience outside of the traditional classical concert venues and pushes the limits of traditional concert programming. As baritone Till Bleckwedel puts it, *"With us, the audience can simply surrender to the music without having to worry about concert etiquette."*

Learn more about The Cast by clicking on the links below:



<https://thecastmusic.com>



<https://www.youtube.com/user/thecastde>



<https://www.facebook.com/thecastofficial/>

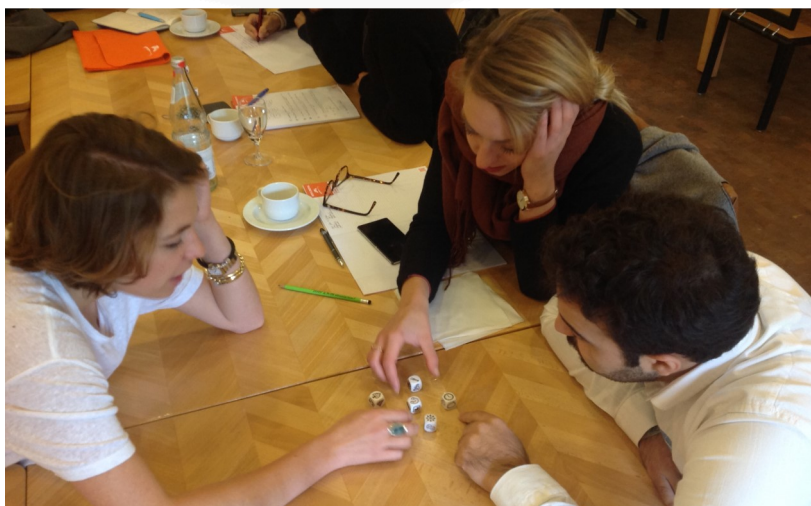


For bookings: <http://www.ursart.de/>

GERMANY

Jelena Löckner—NarraTool

ENCATC spoke with its member Jelena Löckner, a young cultural manager and entrepreneur to learn about her innovative company, NarraTool that helps people to use storytelling as a sustainable strategy for their brand communication. We learned what NarraTool is, how it works and the impact it is making on the cultural sector.



ENCATC: What is NarraTool and where did you get the idea?

Jelena Löckner: The idea for NarraTool came quite naturally to us, as did the name. So our own story is quickly told: We are two cultural managers and narratologists, one with expertise in social media marketing for culture, the other with expertise in corporate storytelling. We were closely following the current trend of applying storytelling in media communication, both in research and practice. We realized that there is a huge demand for applicable methods in storytelling - without which the buzzword remains really just that: a buzzword. So my partner in crime, Rebecca Hagelmoser, and I joined our expertise to build an easily applicable model for storytelling based on concepts from narratology. We turned the analytical concepts and tools from narratology into a praxis framework for the planning and execution of brand storytelling, project storytelling and the integration of user stories. And

this is also how the name was born: Our method consisting of narratological categories (tools) became the NarraToolBox and our company became NarraTool.

ENCATC: What impact or influence is NarraTool having on the cultural sector?

Jelena Löckner: Our method is broadly applicable in any sector, but due to our experience in culture this is where we were able to test our toolbox first. But there are many reasons why storytelling seems especially important and impactful for the cultural sector. Cultural artefacts are mostly already in some way or another narratives, and the processes of analysing, archiving and presenting art and heritage has always been a narrative act. This wealth of narratives can be used to design new strategies in communication, especially in digital media, whether the goal is to educate people or promote exhibitions and events, or



to redefine the institution's identity as a social player. Storytelling can help cultural institutions in finding their own authentic way of dealing with the often neglected issues of brand building and adapting to new media. Our approach really works to empower cultural institutions, and to remind themselves of and then strategically go about what they have always done best - tell stories. I have always been convinced that cultural institutions can become leaders in the digital age, especially since content is once more king.

ENCATC: What is your educational and professional background?

Jelena Löckner: Next to my research in narratology, I worked as a cultural manager in communication and marketing for performing arts institutions. I have worked on some of the first projects in Germany that used social media for promoting classical music, and was able to build a large network at the nexus of culture and web professionals. This, of course, was invaluable in the process of getting my own business off ground.

ENCATC: What skills do you have that you think have been particularly useful for you to successfully launch NarraTool and carry it forward?

Jelena Löckner: The combination of methods and model-building skills as well as knowing the realities

of cultural institutions and their sensitivities towards technological and economical pressures has proven particularly helpful in working with cultural institutions. My experience with teaching and presenting in higher education has also proven very helpful for designing workshops and customized consulting. I could also not have started the business without the ability to build strong networks – a skill necessary both in working in culture marketing and in academia.

ENCATC: What had you wished you had known before you started your business?

Jelena Löckner: That it is OK to put a price to our services and that being new in the field or having a new idea and a product that is still in beta is no reason to be overly bashful, especially when already your first projects prove that the method really works and answers your customers needs.

ENCATC: How did you go about getting startup funds and how did you use them?

Jelena Löckner: We participated in a start-up competition and received very high ratings for our business plan. But since we were lucky enough to start off with some promising projects, we chose not to apply for funding but to grow based on the reputation we won through our first projects.

ENCATC: What was the most difficult challenge to starting your own business and how did you overcome it?

Jelena Löckner: One of the most difficult challenges was tailoring our offers for consulting service. We work at the nexus between management and creation, so we've often had to explain that we're not an agency offering copy writing, but that we educate customers to tell their own stories using our method for planning content and developing their brand. It turned out all the more important to help our customers understand how they can work with us, and how they can integrate our method in their existing structures. So we had to put a lot of thought into creating bundles and packages that make planning easier for our customers.

ENCATC: What advice would you give to others looking to start their own business?

Jelena Löckner: It sounds like an over-used phrase, but it really is important to believe in your idea. It can be daunting if at first your business does not seem to fit any niche. The market is more flexible today for new business ideas than ever before, and it is only natural that new ideas won't fit old niches. You need to find out which fields you can bridge with your business.

Otherwise: just go, you! It is still all too rare for people from culture and the humanities to start their own business.

ENCATC: What keeps you motivated and going?

Jelena Löckner: The feedback from our customers, both in workshops and in the institutions we work with, many of whom say they had long been looking for something like this – a strategic content planning method – and not yet another software or media platform.

And: The realization that it works and keeps growing! We are ourselves still baffled by the many applications for storytelling and the breath of various projects that we are being approached with. Narration is the underlying structure of human meaning making, so it is quite useful – in any context – to know how it works.



About NarraTool:

NarraTool is a storytelling consultancy providing the only narratologically grounded approach to using storytelling as a method in branding and marketing purposes for the digital age.

With the **NarraToolBox** we have developed an easily adaptable storytelling framework based on concepts from narratology, media theory and marketing. We offer training and project development and consulting for brand communication, marketing and education for cultural institutions, higher education and businesses. We help businesses, organizations and individuals in developing their own individual storytelling strategy suited to their communication needs.

Our goal is not a blueprint, but to teach adaptable concepts to enable customers to tell their own stories, to take stock of authentic stories that are already there, and to strategically communicate them over a variety of media channels. Strategic storytelling is not a one-time experiment but a long-term strategy for corporate or organizational communication.

NarraTool is currently developing the storytelling strategy for the EU funded audience development project "smARTplaces", initiated



Learn more and read the description of *NarraTool* in German here:

www.narratool.com/

ITALY

Sietske de Vries—Teatro di Nascosto

Recently ENCATC had the pleasure to ask Sietske de Vries about her experiences as a young cultural mentor and theatre manager. Read on to learn more about her latest international theatre project, the challenges she encounters, and how she deals with them.



ENCATC: What is the story behind Teatro di Nascosto and why did you want to be involved with the project?

Sietske de Vries: Teatro di Nascosto or "Hidden theatre" was started by director Annet Henneman. For more than 18 years she and her international group of actors have told the real-life stories of people who live under oppression, occupation and war. The actors come amongst others from Iraq, Egypt, Palestine, Denmark, England, Kurdistan, Ukraine, Lebanon, Italy and Germany. Next to that, Teatro di Nascosto works on a website and live radio broadcasts. The website is still under construction but it should become a kind of home: a place you like to go to and where you can meet other people through their movies, poems, texts and critical reflections on what it is like to live under the consequences of war.

Annet Henneman also gives workshops about theatre reportage, the method she developed over the years and that lies at the heart of her work. During these

workshops you experience how Annet combines theatre and journalism in order to be able to tell, as truthful and authentic as possible, the stories of people that are normally not voiced or heard. I learned from Annet during workshops in Antwerp and last January I organized a showing of her monologue "Somud u Ahlam" (Resistance and Dreams). Since Annet's approach to theatre is different from what I was used to, I got interested in her work. Also, her open way of working, both in theatre but also as a person, appealed to me. That's why I said "yes" when Annet asked me to organize her tour for her monologue through the Netherlands and Belgium.

ENCATC: How did you manage to get the start-up funds for this project?

Sietske de Vries: In a way, the website is still in its start-up phase. We're trying to create and collect more material, but that takes time. Meanwhile, there is no funding from governments or other funds, due



to the highly politically charged materials. For instance, Italy does not support the project cause it doesn't want to endanger their relations with Iran and Iraq. However, the more Annet performs the more money we get, of course. Also, she collaborates with organizations in Iraq for instance. Next to that we're working on an informal fundraising and this august a special theatre reportage workshop takes place in Volterra, the place where Annet lives. We're trying to create different projects that might produce money in the end.

ENCATC: Can you give us some background into your educational and professional experience that has led to where you are today?

Sietske de Vries: I always wanted to work in the theatre, but when I was 18 I didn't know how to make that happen. Therefore, I started out with a liberal arts program called social-economics at Antwerp University. You could say that I thus postponed my decision. After three years, though, I realized I had to change my path and theatre studies at Utrecht University became my new focus. This study helped me to find my way into the field of theatre and has especially helped me to find words for what I have found intriguing about theatre since I was 10 years old. Furthermore, I started to participate quite actively in theatre projects for instance as actress, dramaturg or production-assistant. It taught me to not only think about theatre, but also to experience its different aspects.

ENCATC: What skills or personal attributes do you think you have that help you to run your theatre projects?

Sietske de Vries: Being independent is one of the main attributes that help me to do my job. Annet lives in Italy, so much of the organizing takes place without actually seeing her. Although we do talk on Skype, it is partly depending on my work thereafter that her

tour will be arranged. I am trying to balance between working on my own and yet being conscious about the fact that I am part of a team. Next to that, being flexible and reliable are two characteristics that make this kind of work not only easier but also more 'free'. I know I can trust Annet and vice versa. That makes this work more a collaboration than a classical 'employer-employee' situation.

ENCATC: What is innovative about this project that makes it different from other theatre projects?

Sietske de Vries: For me, Teatro di Nascosto is of interest because of the combination between theatre and journalism. Especially in times when there is a discussion about 'fake news', Annet and her actors provide a countermovement, since they work with true and authentic stories in a very sincere way. Furthermore, Annet is not interested in short-time collaborations with people who live under these hard conditions. As often as possible she travels to the Middle-East to visit the people she knows. This dedication creates a richness in the work; a richness we would like to share through our website as well.

ENCATC: What have been the most difficult challenges you have encountered in the project so far? How are you working to overcome them?

Sietske de Vries: When selling a performance, you have to make sure that people feel the urgency to program Annet's solo. That takes time, since the monologue has been created outside the regular theatre circuit in the Netherlands and Belgium. Nonetheless, we're looking for partners to work together with. For instance, thanks to our collaboration with Collectief Theater Hart and Theater Oogst, Annet could already show her monologue a few times. It is through these showings that other people, programmers, get interested too and that is how the word spreads. Having faith in the fact that it takes time is the best motivation to

continue with organizing performances.

ENCATC: Are there any specific challenges that arise from working on a project in different countries? How do you deal with these challenges?

Sietske de Vries: Having no access to internet and electricity is a problem from time to time. The website team for instance consists not only of me and my colleague Alex, but also of Fida from Palestine and Tammam from Iraq. Whenever they have no electricity or internet, we cannot reach each other, or only for a very short amount of time. This applies for the live radio broadcasts as well. Doing that demands a lot of flexibility, since you can never be absolutely sure that everyone who is part of the broadcast is going to be there. Luckily, last May we were part of a conference organized by Annet in Volterra. That meant we had enough time and electricity to interview everyone and to collectively think about how the website should be designed and what kind of material is needed. Also, arranging visas proves to be a problem. It is quite complicated to get them. For instance, for the conference in May, none of the Iraqis could come because they didn't get their visas. However, that doesn't keep us from going on. The great thing about Annet's work is that she is able to improvise and find solutions for whenever something turns out differently.

ENCATC: What keeps you motivated and going on this project?

Sietske de Vries: First of all, I firmly believe in the method of working of Teatro di Nascosto. Secondly, I wish that as many people in the Netherlands and in Belgium could hear about the lives of people living in Iraq, Palestine, Egypt, Lebanon and so on. We hear so little about them on the news. Most of the times it is about bombs, war, or refugees. Thus, little attention is paid to their daily life stories. I believe that the work of Teatro di Nascosto breathes a richness and a vision on what it is like to be human that we hardly encounter in our Westerns world. This needs to be shared! It is that urgency that keeps me going.

ENCATC: What advice would you give to students or early career professionals looking to work in theatre and culture?

Sietske de Vries: During my studies and afterwards too, I tried to be part of as many theatre projects as possible. I never did the same tasks, though. For instance, I work as dramaturg/production for Action Zoo Humain, I am an actress at Collectief Theater



About Sietske

Sietske de Vries graduated in 2016 with a Masters in Theatre Studies from Utrecht University. During her studies she was amongst others interested in the aspect of staging in relation to using elements of the 'real' world in performances. In her work with Action Zoo Humain, Collectief Theater Hart, and Teatro di Nascosto she has discovered on a more practical level how the real and the theatrical can be combined to different ends. More recently, she started as artistic mentor at das Kunst vzw. As artistic mentor, she works with children and youngsters on various art projects. This caused her to start questioning and developing her own artistic signature more profoundly.



Find out more about Teatro di Nascosto on their website:

www.teatrodinascosto.com

Hart and I provide art workshops with children in my work as artistic mentor for Das Kunst vzw. I try to do only the things that I find truly interesting or where I can learn from. You have to accept that in theatre and/or the cultural scene, things are never secure or fixed. The only thing you know is that you want to be part of that world. So, give yourself time to find out what it is exactly you want and be confident that you will grow and develop over the years. In the end, all your experiences, good and bad, will bring you to where you are.

SPAIN

Tono Vizcaino — “Piedra, la arqueología a la vuelta de la esquina”

“Piedra, la arqueología a la vuelta de la esquina” is dedicated to the relationship between archaeology and mass culture. ENCATC spoke with Tono Vizcaíno to learn about his passion and project to engage citizens in having a more connected relationship with the heritage surrounding their everyday lives.



ENCATC: How did you get the idea and why did you start your Instagram “Piedra, la arqueología a la vuelta de la esquina” launched in 2015?

Tono Vizcaino: It all started as an attempt to show how alive the past is in our day-to-day existence. Often people think of history as something boring and overly formal, because it's associated with schoolbooks, museums or documentaries. But nothing is further from reality: the past is very much alive and we deal with it constantly and in very different ways. For example, as an advertising resource for the products we consume. Or as an image of cafes and shops we frequent. Or as names of streets and squares through which we walk daily. The interesting thing is that those everyday references allow us to understand and imagine society in the past. And that is where I wanted to influence, noting that history is not as distant and cold as people think, but it is a reality much closer. And I thought Instagram, for its immediacy and its visual appeal, was an ideal tool to use.

ENCATC: ¿Cómo surgió la idea y por qué creaste el Instagram “Piedra, la arqueología a la vuelta de la esquina”, que comenzó su andadura en 2015?

Tono Vizcaino: Todo empezó como un intento de mostrar lo vivo que está el pasado en nuestro día a día. Muchas veces la gente piensa en la historia como algo aburrido y excesivamente formal, porque la asocia a los libros de la escuela, a los museos o a los documentales. Pero nada más lejos de la realidad: el pasado está muy vivo y nos topamos con él constantemente y bajo formas muy distintas. Por ejemplo, como recurso publicitario en los productos que consumimos. O como imagen de las cafeterías y tiendas que frecuentamos. O como nombre de las calles y plazas por las que paseamos a diario. Lo interesante es que esas referencias cotidianas nos permiten entender cómo imagina y utiliza el pasado nuestra sociedad. Y es precisamente ahí donde yo quería incidir, haciendo ver que la historia no es algo tan distante y frío como se cree, sino que se trata de una realidad mucho más cercana. Y me pareció que

Instagram, por su inmediatez y por su atractivo visual, era una herramienta ideal para hacerlo.

ENCATC: Is this part of a larger project? If so, can you please explain?

Tono Vizcaíno: Yes, indeed the Instagram account is more of a window into the project divulging "Piedra" (2013), dedicated to the relationship between archeology and mass culture, for which I use different digital platforms. So while Instagram serves me as a sort of e-book to document and compile all those images of our everyday lives concerning the past using the hashtag #piedradeldía, the blog I write has more extensive posts about very different subjects. Topics can range from the kind of Egyptian-soft-pop-aesthetic of one of the video clips of Katy Perry, to the sexist vision through the film Minions offers history, or the hipster characteristics of the Vikings in some TV series. At the same time I manage a Facebook for "Piedra" where I further spread posts from Instagram and Tumblr, combined with news that relates to the topic and memes about history.

But for the moment, "Piedra" is very much a personal project. Although lately I'm mulling possible applications beyond the blog. I think this combination of archeology, media and marketing is very interesting and with many professional possibilities remain an unexplored world. In addition, there are people who are doing very good things in this line, and collaboration is always a way to develop. For example, recently I collaborated with the company Lure Archaeology at a convention of archaeologists that was done in Madrid. We did a little experiment on the use of the past in brands, particularly in craft beers. So while attendees sampled beers, we wondered about the meanings and qualities that, as consumers, we associate to those brands that use images or old names. It was an interesting experience and quite fun!

ENCATC: ¿Es parte de un proyecto más amplio? Si es así, ¿nos lo podrías explicar?

Tono Vizcaíno: *Sí, de hecho la cuenta de Instagram es una cara más del proyecto divulgativo Piedra (2013), dedicado a las relaciones entre arqueología y cultura de masas, para el que utilizo distintas plataformas digitales. Así, mientras Instagram me sirve como una especie de e-cuaderno de campo donde voy compilando todos esos referentes cotidianos al pasado –que llamo #piedradeldía–, en el*

blog escribo 'posts' más extensos sobre temas muy dispares. Temas que pueden ir desde la estética Egipto 'soft pop' de uno de los videoclips de Katy Perry, pasando por la visión sexista que la película Minions ofrece de la historia, hasta llegar al 'hipsterismo' de los vikingos en algunas series de televisión. Al mismo tiempo gestiono el Facebook de Piedra, en el que difundo los 'posts' de Instagram y Tumblr, y lo combino con noticias que tengan relación con el tema y memes sobre historia.

Pero, por el momento, Piedra es más que nada un proyecto personal de divulgación. Aunque últimamente estoy dándole vueltas a sus posibles aplicaciones más allá del blog. Creo que todo esto de la arqueología, los medios de comunicación y el marketing es un mundo muy interesante y con muchas posibilidades profesionales todavía por explorar. Además, hay gente que está haciendo cosas muy buenas en esta línea, y la colaboración siempre es una vía a desarrollar. Por ejemplo, hace poco colaboré con la empresa Lure Arqueología en una convención de arqueólogos que se hizo en Madrid. Hicimos un pequeño experimento sobre el uso del pasado en las marcas, en concreto en las cervezas artesanas. Así, mientras los asistentes cataban las cervezas, nosotros preguntábamos sobre los significados y las cualidades que, como consumidores, asociaban a esas marcas que utilizan imágenes o nombres antiguos. ¡Fue una experiencia interesante y bastante divertida

ENCATC: Can you give us some background into your education and experience in heritage/ archeology?

Tono Vizcaíno: I studied history at the University of Valencia (Spain) and a specialization in Archaeology at the University of Athens through the Erasmus programme. Throughout my formative years I had the opportunity to participate in various projects and archaeological excavations around the Mediterranean, from Morocco to Greece, which allowed me to meet teams and encounter very different ways of working. After graduating, I decided to continue the investigation and began a doctorate in Valencia. However, it seemed to me - and I still find it to be the case - archaeological research is looking too inwards and cares little about society. So from the beginning it was clear that my research would seek to put the people as the protagonist. Thanks to that, I discovered Public Archaeology, a young field of study that defends precisely the need to explore links between archeology and society. And I ended up

doing a thesis on how Valencian society imagines and uses one of its favorite parts of its history, Iberian culture (s. V -I a. C), its economic, political and identity purposes.

I am currently working on various projects in collaboration with government, institutions and companies, but all with a common element: the centrality of heritage and collective memory.

ENCATC: ¿Cuál es tu formación y experiencia en el mundo de la arqueología y del patrimonio cultural?

Tono Vizcaíno: *Estudié historia en la Universitat de València (España) y me especialicé en arqueología a medio camino entre esa universidad y la de Atenas. A lo largo de mis años de formación tuve oportunidad de participar en distintas excavaciones y proyectos arqueológicos alrededor del Mediterráneo, desde Marruecos hasta Grecia, que me permitieron conocer equipos y maneras de trabajar muy distintas. Tras licenciarme, decidí continuar con la investigación y comencé el doctorado en Valencia. Sin embargo, me parecía –y me sigue pareciendo– que la investigación arqueológica se mira demasiado el ombligo y se preocupa poco por la sociedad. Así que desde el principio tuve claro que en mi investigación buscaría situar a la gente del presente como protagonista. Gracias a eso descubrí la Arqueología Pública, una corriente joven que lo que defiende, precisamente, es la necesidad de estudiar los vínculos entre la arqueología y nuestra sociedad. Y acabé haciendo una tesis sobre cómo la sociedad valenciana imagina y utiliza uno de sus pasados predilectos, el de la cultura ibérica (s. V-I a. C.), con fines económicos, políticos e identitarios.*

Actualmente estoy colaborando en distintos proyectos, en colaboración con administraciones públicas, instituciones y empresas, pero todos ellos con un elemento común: la centralidad del patrimonio y la memoria colectiva.

ENCATC: What skills or personal attributes have helped you launch and carry out this project?

Tono Vizcaíno: Perhaps the most logical is my ability to communicate with attractive writing. I remember when I was in high school I did many works on Greek mythology with a fun approach, because this is what the teacher had asked. Those years of adolescence marked my writing and I have enriched it during my research career at university. Still, I must admit that, unfortunately, academia encourages overly formal

and technical writing. I try to stay away from this



whenever I write on the blog or Instagram though it is

not always easy.

Besides writing, I would say "Piedra" owes much to my critical capacity. My interest in the popular uses of the past comes from largely putting into question the authority and the secrecy of archeology. Archaeologists often criticize the way the media represent the past, or rate of banal usage outside the professional sphere. And they do it because these other ways of understanding the past does not strictly fit their vision. Personally, I think that with this criticism we must also question ourselves as a professional group, and also believe that we must be able to understand the meanings that society gives to the past. That is, at the end of the day, what I stand for with "Piedra".

Finally, I must admit that the project has been greatly influenced by my sense of humor. From the beginning, one of the purposes of "Piedra" has been to break the coldness and distance which almost always come to mind when we think of history. I was attracted to the idea of challenging all that and making a closer connection to the past. And the mood has been one of my main resources to achieve it.

ENCATC: *¿Qué habilidades o cualidades personales consideras que fueron cruciales para el desarrollo de este proyecto?*

Tono Vizcaino: *Quizá la más lógica sea la capacidad de comunicar mediante una escritura atractiva. Recuerdo que cuando iba al instituto hacía muchos trabajos sobre mitología griega con un enfoque divertido, porque así nos lo pedía la profesora. Esos años de mi adolescencia marcaron mi manera de escribir, que he enriquecido durante la carrera investigadora en la universidad. Aún así, debo reconocer que, por desgracia, el mundo académico fomenta una escritura excesivamente formal y técnica, que trato de dejar de lado siempre que escribo en el blog o en Instagram –aunque no siempre es fácil.*

Además de la escritura, yo diría que Piedra debe mucho a mi capacidad crítica. Mi interés por los usos populares del pasado nace, en gran medida, de poner en tela de juicio la autoridad y el hermetismo de la arqueología. Con frecuencia los arqueólogos critican la manera en que los medios de comunicación representan el pasado, o califican de banal su uso fuera del ámbito profesional. Y lo hacen porque esas otras formas de entender el pasado no se ajustan estrictamente a su visión. Personalmente, creo que la crítica debemos hacérsela también a nosotros mismos, como colectivo profesional, y considero también que debemos ser capaces de entender los significados que tiene el pasado para nuestra sociedad. Eso es, al fin y al cabo, lo que defiendo desde Piedra.

Por último, debo reconocer que en el proyecto ha influido mucho mi sentido del humor. Desde el principio, uno de los propósitos de Piedra ha sido romper la frialdad y la distancia con la que casi siempre se piensa la historia. Me atraía la idea de desafiar todo eso y hacer del pasado algo más cercano. Y el humor ha sido una de mis principales recursos para conseguirlo.

ENCATC: **Was there anything you wished you had known before you started the project?**

Tono Vizcaino: Although "Piedra" on Instagram is just over a year old and still cannot speak with much perspective, it is true that I have rethought and clarified some issues. And I think for the better. For example, at first I only put up my pictures, and did it without too much order. So, it was a kind of a personal notebook of what I saw in the field, but with informative intention. Shortly after I realized that if I really wanted to connect with instagramers, I should encourage them to participate by having them send in their own photos. And I should also set a timing so not drive them crazy. That was how I started publishing a photo a day, Monday to Friday, always at the same hours, and to asked them to observe carefully around looking for references. The truth is the vast majority of photos upload are sent to me by



"Piedra" followers, and are not mine. Which is a good sign. Somehow, the "Piedra" Instagram account has become a collaborative game.

Following the same logic emerged, without having planned, thematic weeks that pose as challenges for fans. Well in advance, I propose to find on the street references on a specific topic: for example, urban art using ancient icons, or allusions to historical people and places in the street of our cities. And it works!

ENCATC: *¿Hay algo que desearías haber sabido antes de empezar este proyecto?*

Tono Vizcaíno: Aunque el Instagram de Piedra tiene poco más de un año de vida y todavía no puedo hablar con mucha perspectiva, sí que es cierto que he repensado y matizado algunas cuestiones. Y creo que para bien. Por ejemplo, en un primer momento solamente subía mis fotos, y lo hacía sin demasiado orden. O sea, era una especie de cuaderno de campo personal, pero con intención divulgativa. Poco después me di cuenta de que si realmente quería conectar con los instagramers, debía animarles a participar enviando sus propias fotos. Y también debía fijar un timing para no volverles locos. Fue así como empecé a publicar una foto al día, de lunes a viernes, siempre a las mismas horas, y a pedir a los seguidores que miraran con atención a su alrededor en busca de referentes. Lo cierto es que últimamente la gran mayoría de fotos que subo son las que me envían los seguidores de Piedra, no las mías. Lo cual es una buena señal. De alguna manera, el Instagram de Piedra se ha convertido en un juego colaborativo.

Siguiendo esa misma lógica surgieron, sin haberlo planificado, las semanas temáticas, que las planteo como retos para los seguidores. Con antelación suficiente, les propongo encontrar en la calle referentes sobre una temática concreta: por ejemplo, arte urbano que utilice iconos antiguos, o alusiones a personajes y lugares históricos en el callejero de nuestras ciudades. ¡Y funciona!

ENCATC: **Are you looking for start-up funds to expand this project? If so, where?**

Tono Vizcaíno: "Piedra" is still an informative small-scale project, a kind of hobby that is combined with other related works in archeology and heritage. But, as I said before, I do not rule out exploring new avenues in the near future.

ENCATC: *¿Estás buscando algún tipo de financiación para start-ups de cara a expandir el proyecto? Si es el caso, ¿dónde?*

Tono Vizcaíno: Piedra todavía es un proyecto divulgativo a pequeña escala, una especie de hobby que compagino con otros trabajos relacionados con la arqueología y el patrimonio. Pero, como decía antes, no descarto explorar nuevas vías en un futuro próximo.

ENCATC: **What have been the most difficult challenges you have encountered on this project?**

Tono Vizcaíno: No doubt the first difficulty I faced, and that is still very present, is to visualize the project. We live in a time of real saturation of information, especially on social networks, and it is very difficult to gain a foothold. A good idea is useless if you do not know how to promote it. It's not enough to "be" on the Internet, and that is one of the most common faults of online dissemination proposals. In my case, though it is exciting to see "Piedra" being liked, I am aware that I still have much to do, both in terms of quantitative impact and interaction with followers.

But to be honest, the main challenge is how I go reinventing the initiative with new tools and strategies and not end up with monotonous results.

ENCATC: *¿Cuáles han sido los principales retos que has encontrado al desarrollar este proyecto?*

Tono Vizcaíno: Sin duda la primera dificultad a la que me tuve que enfrentar, y que sigue estando muy presente, es la de visibilizar el proyecto. Vivimos un momento de auténtica saturación de información, sobre todo en las redes sociales, y es muy complicado hacerse un hueco. Una buena idea no sirve de nada si no se sabe promocionar. No basta con "estar" en internet, y ese es uno de los fallos más habituales de las propuestas divulgativas online. En mi caso, aunque es ilusionante ver que Piedra gusta, soy consciente de que todavía me falta muchísimo por hacer, tanto a nivel de impacto cuantitativo como de interacción con los seguidores.

Pero, para ser sinceros, el principal desafío que me planteo es cómo ir reinventando la iniciativa con nuevas herramientas y estrategias para que no acabe resultando monótona.



ENCATC: What advice would you give to students or early career professionals looking to start their own cultural project?

Tono Vizcaino: I advise originality and conviction in what is being done. In my opinion, the best way to stand out is to offer different things, and it is essential to have an open mind. That means not only soak up new things that are being done out there and be willing to experiment, but not be a barrier. We are too accustomed to staying in what we're supposed to do. It is very comfortable in the comfort zone. However, beyond the limits of our disciplines and professions, contacting others through collaboration and training, it is what really leads to the most creative proposals.

ENCATC: ¿Qué consejos darías a los estudiantes o a los jóvenes profesionales que están intentando lanzar su propio proyecto cultural?

Tono Vizcaino: Aconsejaría originalidad y convicción en lo que se hace. En mi opinión, la mejor manera de destacar es ofrecer cosas diferentes, y para ello es fundamental tener la mente abierta. Eso implica no solo empaparse de las cosas novedosas que se hacen por ahí y estar dispuesto a experimentar, sino también no ponerse barreras. Estamos demasiado acostumbrados a no salirnos de lo que se supone que tenemos que hacer. Se está muy cómodo en la zona de confort. Sin embargo, desbordar los límites de nuestras disciplinas y profesiones, entrando en contacto con otras a través de la colaboración y la formación, es lo que realmente da lugar a las propuestas más creativas.

ENCATC: What keeps you motivated and going?

Tono Vizcaino: Seeing that the initiative does what I set it out to do. It is very encouraging when a person

tells you that the "Piedra" blog, for its focus, has awakened their interest in history that they did not have before. People seem to be having fun, and I love it. Or when someone says that since following the "Piedra" Instagram account, they are looking around with new eyes. Even in some cases I have had "compliments" because finding everyday referents of the past has become an addiction for some followers! This change in mindset when seeing the past is what really motivates me to keep going.

ENCATC: ¿Qué es lo que te motiva a continuar con la iniciativa?

Tono Vizcaino: Ver que la iniciativa cumple su cometido. Resulta muy alentador cuando una persona te dice que el blog de Piedra, por su enfoque, le ha despertado un interés en el pasado que antes no tenía. A la gente le parece divertido, y a mi me encanta que sea así. O cuando alguien te comenta que, desde que sigue el Instagram de Piedra, mira a su alrededor con otros ojos. Incluso en algún caso me han maldecido porque la búsqueda de referentes cotidianos del pasado se ha convertido en una adicción! Provocar ese cambio de chip a la hora de ver el pasado es lo que verdaderamente me motiva a seguir adelante.



Learn more and follow the *Piedra* project here:
www.instagram.com/_piedra_/

ENCATC thanks TonoVizcaino for permission to use photos from Piedra.

UNITED EMIRATE STATES

Basemah Alhobishy—MADAC

ENCATC had the pleasure to interview Basemah Alhobishy about her experiences as a young cultural manager working in different countries and about the latest educational project she is involved with. We first met Basemah when she was an active participant at the 6th ENCATC International Study Tour to the Emirates. Read on to find out how she overcomes challenges and stays passionate about culture and cultural education.



Photo via Flickr, UAE - Dubai Marina by [Back to Action] (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

ENCATC: What is the story behind MADAC and why did you want to be involved with the project?

The story behind MADAC started few years ago, when the owners found out that more and more schools in the region started to teach in English and neglect the Arabic language. And as a result, young kids grow up speaking English and aren't able to communicate in their own mother tongue. So they started MADAC school to take initiative in preserving the Arabic identity and language. The fund for the school comes from business men and women who believe in the school mission and want to make a difference.

ENCATC: Can you give us some background into your educational and professional experience that has led to where you are today?

I have a Master degree in Sustainable Management from Vancouver Island University in Canada. I have

been working with different educational and cultural organizations on a volunteer basis.

ENCATC: What skills or personal attributes do you think you have that help you to run your educational projects?

I think one of the most useful skills that could attribute in this project is being able to speak two languages, to benefit the most from the two cultures so I can mobilize the knowledge.

ENCATC: What is innovative about this project that makes it different from other cultural and heritage education projects?

The curriculum and the school building are very innovative in this project. The curriculum is designed to be connected more to the Arabic culture and values unlike other curriculums in other schools. And



the school building was built according to Islamic architecture which is influenced by the Quran and the cultures of Arabia and the Middle-East. This kind of architecture reinforces concepts of unity, impermanence and beauty and help students reconnect with their own culture and identity.

ENCATC: What have been the most difficult challenges you have encountered in the project so far? How are you working to overcome them?

One of the most difficult challenges I have encountered so far in the project is changing the mind-set of the parents on how important for their children to learn their mother tongue first before mastering any other languages. They seem to be trapped in the dogma that English will take their children places where Arabic can't. And in my opinion, this isn't the case as the children grow speaking language that isn't theirs and lose their sense of identity and self-realization.

One should be bilingual, or trilingual, or better yet... multilingual. I envy those who know more than two languages. But that's not the point here; the point is the lack of importance we give our mother tongue. Whatever language it may be.

ENCATC: What keeps you motivated and going on this project?

What keeps me motivated is my passion, I am very passionate about education and culture and whenever I am thinking of giving up, passion gives me a kick to try hard and keep going. For me, culture is important because it defines our evolutionary identity. Culture helps us understand our ancestral values and gives us the very meaning of life. It also makes us unique from other parts of the world. And for the education, I believe that it is the starting point for all the change we want to see in the new generations.

ENCATC: You attended the ENCATC Study Tour in the UAE in March 2017. What was the most useful part of the Tour for you, as a young professional?

One of the most useful part of the Study Tour to the UAE is that I was able to communicate my culture and my heritage to other people from different countries who may not have a knowledge about such culture. And since UAE is a multicultural society, I find that cultural awareness becomes central when we have to interact with people from other cultures. People see, interpret, and evaluate things in different ways. What is considered an appropriate behaviour in one culture is frequently inappropriate in another one. Misunderstandings arise when we use our meanings to make sense of other people's reality.

ENCATC: What advice would you give to students or early career professionals looking to work in education and culture?

The advice I would give to students and early career professionals looking for work in education and culture is to reach out to organisations and volunteer with them.



About Basemah Alhobishy

Basemah is a blogger, entrepreneur and art & culture enthusiast. She lives and works between Canada, The United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

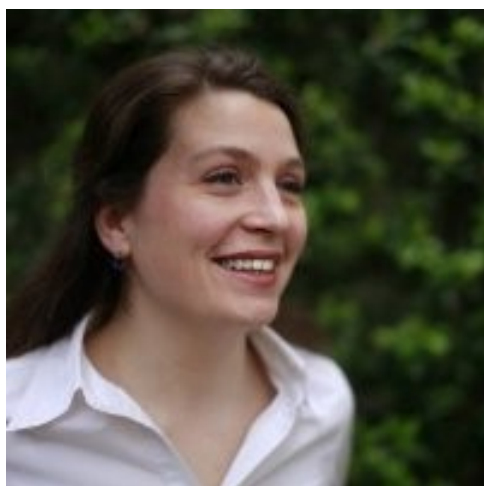


Read Basemah's blog on her website:
www.basimajoahni.com

UNITED KINGDOM

Marie-Séverine de Caraman Chimay—Watts of Westminster

Recently ENCATC had the pleasure to sit down with Marie-Séverine de Caraman Chimay, Watts of Westminster est.1874, a leading British company specialising in luxury textiles, wallpapers and passementerie for the interiors and ecclesiastical sectors worldwide. We wanted to learn how the world renowned company keeps an entrepreneurial spirit and is taking textiles to new places.



ENCATC: What is your educational and professional background?

Marie-Séverine de Caraman Chimay: At university I studied Classics and then I did an MA in Business Management at. When I was deciding my studies, I did what I was interested in not necessarily thinking that someday I would be taking over my family's company, Watts of Westminster. I guess you could say I already had an informal education growing up around the family business. I was born with Watts of Westminster being all around me; I don't know life without it.

ENCATC: Can you go more into the family legacy of your company?

Marie-Séverine de Caraman Chimay: My grandmother had taken it over after World War II when the economy in Britain was very bad. At that

time the family had gathered around the table and said they weren't interested in doing anything with Watts of Westminster given the economic circumstances. That's when my grandmother stepped in and said she was bored at home and that she would do something with it. A big break came in 1953 with the coronation of Elizabeth II and the company was tasked with supplying all the silks. That order truly brought the company back to life.

ENCATC: With this family business and heritage, was there something you wished you had known before taking over the leadership and legacy of Watts of Westminster?

Marie-Séverine de Caraman Chimay: Probably some more knowledge about accountancy would have been helpful. But this is a skill you can learn as I had to in order to run the company.

ENCATC: How have you adapted your business model in changing times?

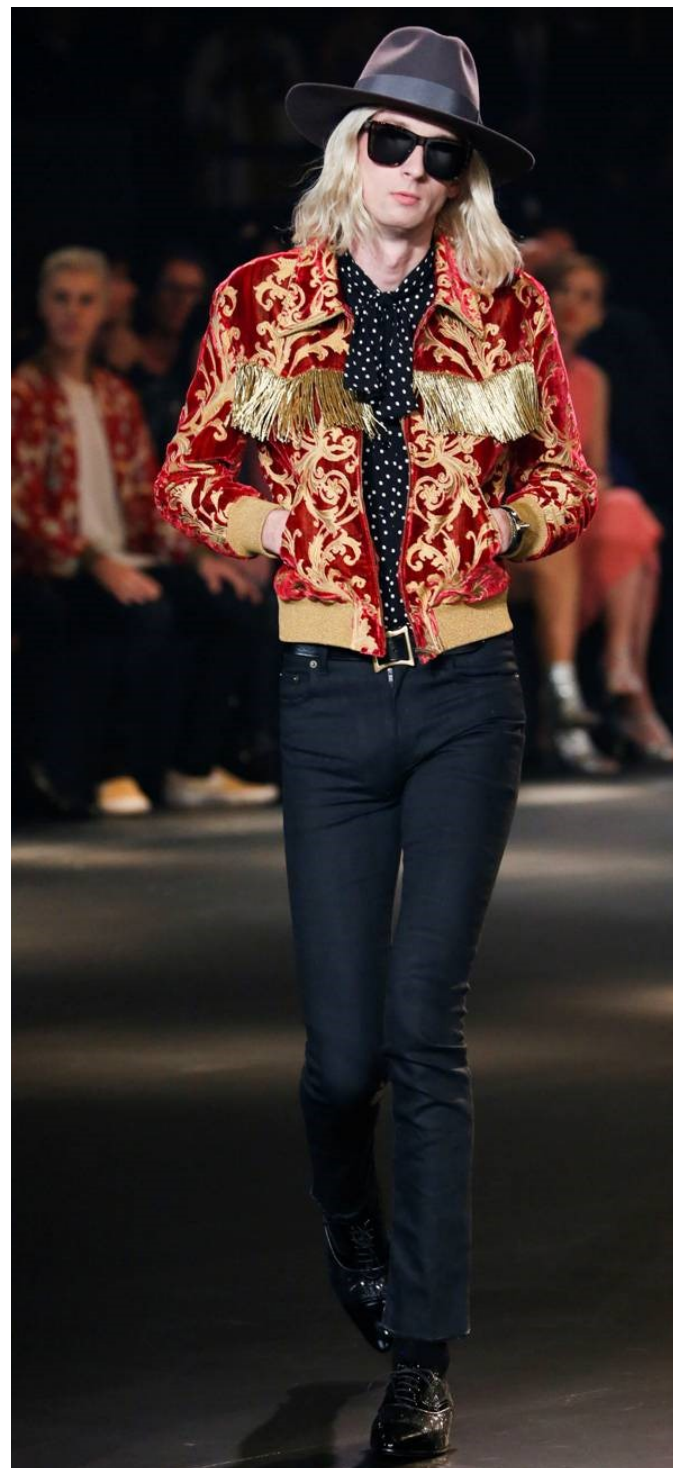
Marie-Séverine de Caraman Chimay: Our business model has had to change. People move faster today, they have easy and expect access to products and services. We sell worldwide and work directly with decorators and clients located around the globe.

Before the era of email (think back to the fax and telephone), we had agents around the world who would be our intermediary channels with clients. Today the agents are gone. Today our clients prefer to come directly to us in London or I jump on a plane – say to Dubai tomorrow to meet with a client. All is possible with international travel. It has made it easier to connect with our audience and I think our clients appreciate the direct person to person contact with Watts of Westminster. What has also changed is our clientele. The middle market has completely died over the last 20 years. We used to do a lot of bread and butter, middle market orders, but today we only work on very high-end projects, mainly bespoke work. Our bespoke work means we have to adapt to our clients' specific desires and visions. They want something original and of the highest quality. There is a return to wanting European, handmade, exclusive, historical, luxury products. And there is a small set of the population that has the financial means to buy it.

As we are working with a very specific clientele, market research is so important to what we do. I work in a niche of a niche market. We need to understand what our clients want and establish how our products are going to supply their demand. We talk to people. We do online research. Here's an example of how we move forward and adapt to change. In the restoration world when working on a historical listed building, in the past the fabrics supplied would be "in the style of" the period, say the 18th century for example. But today it's not enough to respect the period style. Architects, decorators, restorers have strict guidelines like particular weaving techniques, the colors of the period, etc. We do a lot of this kind of work now and use our extensive archive collection to produce the textiles, wallpapers and interiors. What's interesting about this example is that this was common practice at the beginning of the 20th century that has now resurfaced. It shows we have to adapt and accept that times will change.

Another interesting development was a request from Yves Saint Laurent. YSL suddenly arrived as they wanted to find new interesting sources for their fabrics. I think they found us on the Internet - looking for historical fabrics.

They first sent a team of 3 to London where we had a meeting and opened our archives. We had a lot of exchanges and talks about colours, suitability for clothing etc., the first prototype was approved and then appeared at the LA catwalk. They are very nice people to work with and the quality is very important to them - the "made in Europe". I believe fashion designers usually use "clothing" fabrics and not furnishing fabrics so I was told this is a new experience for YSL. We are now discussing for another collection but nothing decided yet - fingers crossed!



ENCATC: Is there a specific skill set you have that has helped you to be a better leader?

Marie-Séverine de Caraman Chimay: I'm a people person. I'm sure that helps to be a leader. I don't know if that's a skill I developed. I was probably born with it, but I think it's a skill you can learn at least up to a certain point. I do think it does come more naturally to some people.

ENCATC: What keeps you motivated and going?

Marie-Séverine de Caraman Chimay: It's probably the people I meet. I work with wonderful people and I have a wonderful team. Our clients lead unique lives and to respond to their desires for our product is wonderful. I say to people I live in a novel and I can't really ask for better.

ENCATC: If a leader can be more effective when you have a good team, what kind of people do you surround yourself with?

Marie-Séverine de Caraman Chimay: Having the right team is crucial. People often have a misconception about the number of people working for Watts of Westminster. They think because we have furnished many elegant homes, palaces, churches, cathedrals, and constitutional buildings such as the Houses of Parliament at Westminster, that there is a big team behind the scenes. Not so. The company has a small staff in London and has contracts with artisans and craftsman who produce the luxury textiles, wallpapers and interiors. In order for the day-to-day operations to run efficiently I need a dedicated staff where everyone is a team player and they need to be flexible and versatile in order to handle unexpected circumstances. Being a small team, if one person is not performing well it can have a big impact on the rest so it is key to find the right people who work well together. I also need people who are knowledgeable about the product and who are passionate about continuing the company's tradition of decorative design.

ENCATC: How do you attract investors for funding for new projects?

Marie-Séverine de Caraman Chimay: As we are privately owned, family business, fifth generation we don't need or look to outside investment. We're sustainable at the moment! It works and it is fantastic!

ENCATC: If you were to give advice to a young entrepreneur, someone who is looking to launch themselves into a project, what advice would you give?

Marie-Séverine de Caraman Chimay: You really need to believe in your project. That's the first thing. You have to be ready to invest your time and work on it tirelessly. Be so enthusiastic about it and you will catch people's attention and hopefully you'll have worked so hard on your project that you can fill a void or respond to their need.



About Watts of Westminster:

In 1874, the architects George Frederick Bodley and Thomas Garner won the commission to design the new offices of the London School Board. As well as the building itself, the School Board also asked Bodley and Garner to provide the furnishings for the board room and the commissioners' offices. The two architects saw an opportunity, quickly founding an interior furnishings company in partnership with George Gilbert Scott the Younger. This 'money spinner' on the side was a little too grubby for gentleman-architects unwilling to be directly associated with trade, and so the company was born as Watts and Co. While some have suggested that the name may have come from a pun 'Watts in a name?', the firm may also have been named after Scott's landlord, R.R. Watts.



Learn more about the history of Watts of Westminster on the web:
www.watts1874.co.uk/history/

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WHERE CAN TODAY'S STUDENTS AND TOMORROW'S CULTURAL MANAGERS GET A JUMP START ON THEIR CAREER? HOW CAN THEY ENHANCE THEIR PROFESSIONAL PROFILES TO TAKE ON TODAY'S COMPETITIVE JOB MARKET?

ENCATC, the European network on cultural management and policy, strongly encourages students and young/early career professionals to have work experience abroad. This is an opportunity for tomorrow's leaders to get a jump start on building their CVs, put into practice their knowledge learned through education and training, and develop and hone their skills in another cultural environment.

PRAXIS e-magazine is a unique information service provided to students enrolled in ENCATC member universities to study cultural management and cultural policy. Each issue aims to cover a wide geographical area and highlight opportunities for professional development across the many disciplines of the arts and cultural sector: festivals, performing arts, heritage, museums, creative industries, music, and many more! Since it was first published in 2008, ENCATC's PRAXIS magazine has published more than 1,000 offers including internships and educational opportunities in over 55 countries in Europe and beyond.

ABOUT ENCATC:

ENCATC is the European network on cultural management and policy. It is an independent membership organisation gathering over 100 higher education institutions and cultural organisations in over 40 countries. Founded in 1992, ENCATC represents, advocates and promotes cultural management and cultural policy education, professionalises the cultural sector to make it sustainable, and creates a platform of discussion and exchange at the European and international level.

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