



cirques & transmissions

## Theoretical session

March 28 & 29 2025

Zirkusquartier, Zurich (CH)

### Feminist approaches to (re)thinking governance: what paths for the performing arts sector ?

With the support of *Movetia*, the Reboot project is hosting a two-day peer-to-peer reflection on governance issues in the performing arts, in collaboration with *Zirkusquartier*. This event is designed for artists working in circus, dance, theater, and related disciplines.

# Feminist approaches to (re)thinking governance: what avenues for the performing arts sector ?

PEER-TO-PEER EXCHANGE DAYS — 27-29TH MARCH 2025 -ZIRKUSQUARTIER, ZURICH (CH)

Historically, feminist movements have sought to organise themselves more horizontally and democratically in order to limit the power dynamics within their associations. Since the 1970s, several innovative forms of organisation and tools have emerged, such as co-management, participative management, non-violent communication tools and single-sex spaces. These models aim to break with institutionalised hierarchies and counter traditional patriarchal structures.

In the performing arts, these feminist principles have inspired new forms of collective creation. More and more companies, collectives and structures are adopting shared decision-making processes and an equitable distribution of artistic responsibilities, seeking to avoid traditional hierarchies. Between advances and limits, many challenges remain in order to maintain the balance between theoretical equality and internal practices where forms of informal power may still emerge.

With the support of **Movetia** and the collaboration of **Zirkusquartier**, the Reboot project is organising two days of reflection on governance issues in the performing arts sector, aimed at actors working in circus, dance, theatre and related disciplines.

## The Project

The project consists of three days of in-person exchanges and workshops, taking place from March 27 to 29, 2025, at *Zirkusquartier* in Zurich. These days will feature hands-on workshops led by experts: Agathe Dumont on artists' health, *Collectif Fracas* on conflict management with queer and feminist approaches, and *Collective Tools Project* on inclusive collaboration tools. These activities will be complemented by collective discussions on governance in the performing arts sector and a presentation of the *Reboot* project during *Circ-Exchange*. This interactive format fosters the exchange of ideas and the transmission of practical knowledge while addressing the needs of professionals in the cultural sector.

The project has strong potential for structural change by proposing innovative approaches based on feminist and inclusive governance models. These models seek to break away from institutionalized hierarchies by promoting co-management, participatory governance, and equitable, collaborative practices. They also address key issues such as conflict resolution, the physical and mental well-being of artists, and the implementation of horizontal processes. By encouraging cultural organizations to adopt these practices, the project aims to sustainably improve the working environment in the performing arts sector.

The tools and methods developed within this project are easily transferable and adaptable. They can be applied to various artistic disciplines (circus, dance, theater, visual arts) as well as other professional and associative contexts. Resources such as collaboration protocols and conflict management tools will be made available online via the *Collective Tools Project's* toolbox and documents shared by *Collectif Fracas*. This adaptability ensures a broad impact beyond the immediate scope of the event.

The team involved brings together recognized experts in diversity and inclusive governance. Agathe Dumont specializes in psychosocial risks and artists' well-being. *Collectif Fracas* contributes expertise in conflict management based on queer and feminist approaches. *Collective Tools Project* develops practical tools to strengthen collaboration within collectives. Lastly, *Reboot* offers concrete methodologies to support emerging artists. This diversity of approaches ensures a comprehensive and relevant response to the challenges addressed.

The project's implementation is structured and professional. Thanks to a partnership with *Movetia* and the support of *Zirkusquartier Zurich*, known for its commitment to circus arts, the project benefits from a solid infrastructure. The program is clear and well-planned, alternating between workshops, discussions, and

collective reflections. The facilitators, all experienced professionals, will ensure high-quality sessions that meet participants' expectations.

Finally, access to the event is designed to maximize its impact. Targeting artists, collectives, and cultural organizations, the project welcomes a diverse professional audience. The workshops will be conducted in English, facilitating the inclusion of a supra-regional and international audience. Additionally, the project's outcomes and resources will be publicly available after the event, enabling broader dissemination of the tools and methodologies developed.

## Practical informations

When	March 27-29 2025
Where	Zirkusquartier, Zurich (CH)
For whom	Cultural actors, collectives and institutions working in the performing arts sector (circus, dance, theatre)
Contacts	Sarah Simili, <a href="mailto:sarah.simili@gmail.com">sarah.simili@gmail.com</a> , +41 76 446 67 83 Yaelle Antoine, <a href="mailto:yelleantoine@gmail.com">yelleantoine@gmail.com</a> , +33 6 67 55 12 06
Participation	By invitation
Language	English

## Schedule

### THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2025

**From 4:00 PM** - Arrival of speakers

**7:00 PM - 9:00 PM** - *Reboot* workshop as part of *Circ-Exchange*

### FRIDAY, MARCH 28, 2025

**9:30 AM** - Arrival of participants

**10:00 AM - 12:30 PM** - Workshop and discussion with Agathe Dumont: "Taking Risks, Taking Care: A Key Issue in Artists' Careers"

12:30 PM - 2:00 PM - Lunch

**2:00 PM - 4:30 PM** - Workshop and discussion with Collective Tools Project: "Reinventing Collaboration: Practical Tools for Inclusive and Effective Collectives"

**4:30 PM - 4:45 PM** - Break

**4:45 PM - 5:30 PM** - Day's recap

### SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 2025

**9:30 AM** - Arrival of participants

**10:00 AM - 12:30 PM** - Workshop and discussion with Collectif Fracas: "Transforming Conflicts: Queer and Feminist Tools for Collaborative and Inclusive Solutions"

12:30 PM - 2:00 PM - Lunch

**2:00 PM - 5:00 PM** - Collective reflection: "(Re)Thinking Governance: What Pathways for the Performing Arts Sector?"

**5:00 PM - 5:30 PM** - Conclusion and closing remarks

# Workshops presentation

## **“TAKING RISKS, TAKING CARE: A KEY ISSUE IN ARTISTS’ CAREERS” - AGATHE DUMONT**

Agathe Dumont is a dancer, professor of artistic education at the École supérieure d’art et de design (TALM) in Angers, and an independent researcher specializing in circus arts, dance, and visual arts. She has conducted extensive research on the health and well-being of artists, particularly focusing on the psychosocial risks they face.

In 2022, she published a report entitled “Taking Risks, Taking Care: Health as a Key Issue in Circus Artists’ Careers.” This study, initiated in 2019, follows an earlier research project conducted in 2015 on dancers. The primary objective of this research was to examine the role of health and care-related issues, the factors contributing to physical, mental, and social injuries, and their prevention in the careers of artists from different generations, disciplines, and fields. By collecting data through surveys and qualitative interviews, Agathe Dumont aimed to give artists a voice on their health, revealing how they incorporate this issue into their daily lives and professional journeys.

The findings seek to provide an overview of the sector’s practices and perceptions regarding health and care while highlighting artists’ testimonials through personal narratives. This research opens avenues for reflection on improving support mechanisms and questioning the role of institutions and work organization in preventing psychosocial risks among artists. It emphasizes the importance of identifying and addressing these issues to develop effective support and prevention strategies.

## **“TRANSFORMING CONFLICTS: QUEER AND FEMINIST TOOLS FOR COLLABORATIVE AND INCLUSIVE SOLUTIONS” - COLLECTIF FRACAS**

**Collectif Fracas** is a queer and feminist collective founded in 2019, dedicated to conflict resolution and addressing violence within groups. Inspired by transformative justice, the collective seeks to turn conflicts into opportunities for healing and accountability without resorting to traditional judicial approaches.

### **Main Missions:**

- **Intervention:** Utilizing methods such as mediation, restorative circles, and social analysis (*socianalysis*) to support collectives in resolving tensions.
- **Training:** Conducting workshops and tailored training sessions to educate and equip communities with tools for conflict management and violence prevention.
- **Resources:** Providing tools, testimonials, and practical guides to encourage collective and compassionate conflict resolution.

### **Events and Activities:**

- Organization of the *(In)justices* festival in 2021, focusing on justice within queer and feminist communities, featuring debates and panel discussions available online.
- Customized support for collectives in various regions.

## **“REINVENTING COLLABORATION: PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR INCLUSIVE AND EFFECTIVE COLLECTIVES” - THE COLLECTIVE TOOLS PROJECT**

**The Collective Tools Project** is a collaborative action-research initiative launched in September 2023, bringing together the *Haute école d’art et de design – Genève (HEAD – Genève)* and *La Manufacture – Haute école des arts de la scène* (Lausanne).

### **Main Objectives:**

- **Facilitating Collective Work:** Analyzing and improving group dynamics within the cultural scene and activist movements in French-speaking Switzerland.
- **Identifying Effective Methods:** Observing and formalizing tools and protocols that promote harmonious cooperation and help collectives achieve their goals.

### **Methodology:**

- **Observation:** Studying various artistic, associative, and activist collectives to understand their working methods and collaboration tools.

- **Formalization:** Documenting these tools in the form of protocols or “game rules” for practical application.
- **Experimentation:** Testing these protocols within different groups to assess their effectiveness and adaptability across various contexts.

**The Collective Tools Project** provides an open-access toolbox designed to enhance cooperation within groups and collectives. These practical tools, collected, tested, or developed by the team, are available online.

## **REBOOT WORKSHOP AT CIRC-EXCHANGE – “COLLECTIVE MAKING”**

On Thursday evening, the Reboot team will lead a workshop dedicated to “collective making” as part of *Circ-Exchange*. This session will introduce the Reboot project while providing emerging artists with concrete tools to improve their collective work. Through practical exercises and discussions, participants will explore group dynamics, learn effective collaborative methods, and reflect on ways to strengthen cooperation within their artistic projects.

*Circ-Exchange* is a networking format that includes workshops and discussions for circus professionals in Switzerland. Its goal is to create a space where artists can exchange ideas, meet, share experiences, move together, and explore key questions such as: What are the needs of the circus scene? How can the Swiss circus community be strengthened? How can exchanges between artists be further promoted?

## **Speakers**

### **Sarah Simili**

Born in 1983 in Valais (Switzerland), Sarah Simili is a circus artist, director, teacher and researcher. She has directed the Courant d'Cirque company since 2015, as well as the encirqué project(s). Sarah is also in charge of production and administration for a number of large-scale projects, including LABO'Cirque and Axé Cirque. She has a DAS in Cultural Management and a CAS in Dramaturgy and Text Performance, and completed a Master's degree in Gender Studies at the University of Angers in 2023. She also trained as an equality advisor at La Petite in Toulouse. In 2024, she began a second Master's degree in Management of Artistic Education Establishments at the University of Rouen. At the same time as her artistic, teaching and academic activities, Sarah is heavily involved in the recognition and structuring of the circus arts in Switzerland. She chaired the Swiss Federation of Circus Schools (FSEC) for 7 years and co-founded the ProCirque association, of which she is currently co-president.

### **Yaelle Antoine**

Yaelle Antoine trained at the Annie Fratellini circus school and at L'Esacto-Lido in tightrope and contortion. Following an injury, she left her career as an acrobat behind and put her years of experience in the ring to good use as a director and teacher. She is experimenting with circus writing, inspired by the circus and the spoken word. She co-writes most of her work with Marion Guyez, a tightrope walker, researcher and lecturer at the UGA, and co-founds *Les Tenaces*, a women's collective fighting against sexism and for parity in the circus and street arts. Year after year, Yaelle Antoine, keen to find the right spaces for her dramaturgies, invests urban and outdoor spaces. For her, investing the public space remains a privileged artistic means of giving concrete expression to her social and political concerns through mediation and artistic acts. Playing with formats, spaces and aesthetics, she has a taste for hybridity. Yaelle Antoine is a member of the teaching team at Esacto-Lido, and is involved in a number of training courses. Yaelle Antoine is subsidised by the Occitanie region and the Drac.

### **Agathe Dumont**

Agathe Dumont is a dancer and art teacher at the École supérieure d'art et de design TALM - Angers, with a doctorate in performing arts from the Université Sorbonne-Nouvelle. She conducts theoretical and practical research into the everyday body and artistic work. On the one hand, she is focusing on the sociology of artistic work, the relationship between ‘taking care of’ and the organisation of work, and on the other, she is developing practical research, in the studio or on stage, on everyday life, training, gestures of care and resistance, particularly

in circus, dance or performance within *TERRAIN - L'incubateur en Pays de la Loire*. From 2015 to 2020 she worked with Mariam Faquir on an artistic research project at *L'L-chercher en arts vivants*, which resulted in the book *Déclinaisons du quotidien, mettre le corps au travail*, published in 2023 by L'Éditions.

### **Jules Farce**

In 2012, Jules Farce founded the queer, feminist and self-managed Parisian bar *La Mutinerie*. In 2019, he is also - alongside Elsa Deck-Marsault and Cha Prieur - co-founder of the *Collectif Fracas*, a queer and feminist collective that helps people deal with interpersonal conflict, violence and aggression. These two groups, each in their own way, have taught him a great deal about how groups work, how to regulate conflict and how to take account of systemic issues of power and oppression. Jules has received training in a number of tools and systems relating to the fields of restorative justice and transformative justice, and is also an institutional socioanalyst working as an independent consultant. His practice is aimed at clarifying and analysing the forces at work within a group so as to help people emerge from crises and reorganise their collective forms.