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1 SHORT PROJECT DESCRIPTION

TILL IT'S OVER is a cross-disciplinary collaboration between SKaGeN and the American visual artist Richard Jackson on the themes of civil war, tenderness and revenge.

Richard Jackson made an installation based on Picasso's famous war painting Guernica. Actors Valentijn Dhaenens and Clara van den Broek create a theatrical performance based on the same theme.

How do two people deal with the consequences of extreme violence, and what is the lasting impact when time has done its job? Can violence bring us closer together? Do we penetrate deeper into each other and do we get connected despite or even as a result of the violence we inflict on each other?

The installations of action painter Richard Jackson often express a consequence: what remains visible after a powerful physical action?

As performers, Dhaenens and van den Broek allow themselves to be affected by Jackson's work and relate to the context he creates.

TILL IT'S OVER is a collaboration between SKaGeN, Richard Jackson, S.M.A.K. Museum for Modern Art Ghent, C-Mine Genk, the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp, and Het Toneelhuis Antwerp.

2 CAST EN CREW

Concept en play:	Valentijn Dhaenens en Clara van den Broek
Scenography:	Richard Jackson
Mouvement direction:	Charlotte Vanden Eynde
Costume design:	Barbara De Laere
Technical director:	Jeroen Wuyts
Production director:	Karen Van Peel
General management:	Korneel Hamers
Production:	SKaGeN in collaboration with Villanella/DEStudio
Coproduction:	S.M.A.K., C-Mine, KASKA

With the support of de Vlaamse Gemeenschap

Thanks to Latze Dieye, Matar Diouf, Patrick Da Silva Rosa, Louise Goegebeur, Joris Goorden, crew Villanella

3 PLAYLIST

Мо	25/03/2019	C – MINE Genk	20:00	Avant-première
Tu	26/03/2019	C – MINE Genk	20:00	Première
We	27/03/2019	C – MINE Genk	20:00	
Th	28/03/2019	C – MINE Genk	20:00	
Fr	29/03/2019	C – MINE Genk	20:00	
Sa	30/03/2019	C – MINE Genk	20:00	
Tu	14/05/2019	Antwerpse Kleppers	20:00	Location: Academie Mutsaertstraat
We	15/05/2019	Antwerpse Kleppers	20:00	Location: Academie Mutsaertstraat
Th	16/05/2019	Antwerpse Kleppers	20:00	Location: Academie Mutsaertstraat
Fr	17/05/2019	Antwerpse Kleppers	20:00	Location: Academie Mutsaertstraat
Sa	18/05/2019	Antwerpse Kleppers	20:00	Location: Academie Mutsaertstraat
Su	19/05/2019	Antwerpse Kleppers	20:00	Location: Academie Mutsaertstraat
Su	26/05/2019	S.M.A.K. Gent	14:00	Location: Floraliën
Tu	28/05/2019	S.M.A.K. Gent	14:00	Location: Floraliën
We	29/05/2019	S.M.A.K. Gent	14:00	Location: Floraliën
Th	30/05/2019	S.M.A.K. Gent	14:00	Location: Floraliën
Fr	31/05/2019	S.M.A.K. Gent	14:00	Location: Floraliën
Sa	01/06/2019	S.M.A.K. Gent	14:00	Location: Floraliën
Su	02/06/2019	S.M.A.K. Gent	14:00	Location: Floraliën

4 CONVERSATION WITH THE CONTRIBUTORS

led by Johan Pas

Johan Pas is an art historian, a curator and a writer. Since October 2017 he is the dean of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp.

Johan Pas:

What led to 'Till it's over', how did it all start?

Clara van den Broek:

I read a book about civil war, being Without Blood by Alessandro Baricco.

A bit later I went to an exposition of Richard Jackson, 'Ain't Painting a Pain' in S.M.A.K. Ghent. And I was really impressed, amongst other things by the fact that there is something theatrical in his work, because it is three dimensional, you enter the work and you start wondering 'o my god, what has happened, where does this come from?'. So there is suspense, there is a time dimension, you're involved physically and there is lots of space for imagination because the action took already place, and you see the 'jelled' results.

One work, 'Painting with Two Balls', a car on its side with two big balls on top, made me think of the opening scene in the book by Baricco. In that scene you have a car coming from a distance, surrounded by smoke... So I thought it would be wonderful to be able to play the book and having a visual dialogue with this work of Richard Jackson. But how to organize that? When I asked SMAK they kindly offered me to put me in contact with Richard Jackson and that's what happened, and Richard was interested in the project from the beginning. But he immediately said he preferred to come with something new, make a new work, go for a new experience instead of retaking an old work.

Some time later I was going on a trip to California with my mom and children and the night before leaving Valentijn was at my house and he suggested to write Richard an email telling him I was going to be in LA. Maybe I could meet him, Valentijn said, although I was not expecting that to happen... But I did write the email and after two hours I already got a very friendly and open answer from Richard and one thing led to another.

Richard read the book. But then we didn't get the rights to play the book, it's very hard to get rights to adapt Baricco...

So that's one part of the story.

The other part is that we wanted to do something new with SKaGeN. I guess we are at a certain stage in our career, having explored our discipline as text actors a little bit, and now looking for new paths.

Valentijn was interested in doing a play without words. And I had done a performance during summer with almost no words, so we found each other on that

level. We asked Charlotte Vanden Eynde to join us and help us find ways to express ourselves without words. And so we started working sort of from scratch. We had the book, we had the theme of civil war and we documented on that.

Charlotte's way of working is very different from ours. In the beginning I had the impression we were doing nothing. She put us on the rehearsing floor and gave us an assignment like 'you're waiting for something', that's it. And then we were on that scene for like two hours, Charlotte took all her time and didn't give us the feeling to expect something, and since there was no pressure for creating, things just happened. That was very new to me, because improvisation is like horrible to me. This new experience was very interesting... Everything was based on 'being' and 'doing', not 'showing'.

And then there was the work of putting the things in order en retaking them, to build a performance worth looking at. In retaking the parts we have to watch out not to loose the quality of not 'showing' too much, not to step in regular theater again. It's really a cross-over now between theater and visual arts, and for us also a new way of performing. For me it is refreshing not to be able to grab to the normal, well known theater-tricks while performing.

Johan Pas:

In what way is the theme of civil war still relevant? And is it important that the audience grasps that connection?

Clara van den Broek:

For us it really is about civil war, or, in a broader sense, about violence and intimacy and the relationship between those two.

But we had some try outs for people who really didn't know a thing about the performance, and some of them saw other things. Some of them saw a play about domestic violence, for instance. But that's fine, imagination can flow, it seems the play can be touching as well if you don't know it's about civil war.

Anyway, we will make clear on the flyer what the performance is about, so people who want to know can read it.

Johan Pas:

Mr Jackson, may we know from you why you got involved in the first place? Why you responded to the invitation? Did you ever work with actors or theater makers before?

Richard Jackson:

No, I didn't, which is partly the reason for accepting the invitation I guess.

I mostly work alone, I worked alone like for ever, and lately I had an assistant, which was an evolution, cause it's interesting when you work with somebody, because they bring new information. To be honest I'm growing away from the art community, because it's becoming exactly what I didn't want to be involved in, a competitive business that's more and more about money than about other things where I'm more interested in.

When I was in school I thought 'something interesting is going on here, because no one is making any money'. And that's not the case now, younger people now see it as an industry, and I guess it is.

But what I'm really looking for is the new experience, I'm always looking to learn something. I can't learn something by doing the same thing over and over, except that I can make a lot of money.

What's interesting about the play now for me, is that people all have a different take and for me that's really good, you know, because when they see other things they can have a conversation. And with my work it's kind of the same way, it's performative, like I'm the performer, but the difference is I don't like people around, because if they see everything and understand everything it's not as interesting for them as when they have to try to figure things out.

Moreover I was interested in the project because it was about civil war. My painting on the stage floor is an adaptation of Picasso's Guernica, which basically is a painting about civil war, Spanish civil war, black and white, really powerful.

Clara van den Broek:

The first month Charlotte, Valentijn and myself were rehearsing in Antwerp, and we shared information with Richard via mail and WhatsApp. And then Richard came up with something. It could have been a mismatch, but things really came together surprisingly well. And for me that's due to the fact that Richard is so flexible and open, but still so loyal to himself, which I find amazing and inspiring.

Johan Pas:

What I think is amazing here is that from both sides a lot of risk is involved in this project. You, the actors, take a lot of risk in going to an artist in California and ask him to collaborate. And the visual artist, well established in the gallery system, takes the risk of getting involved in a theater piece that hasn't been developed so far.

Clara van den Broek:

It was funny when we met the gallery owner in Paris and mentioned our budgets. The way he looked at us said everything, we were on different planets... But Richard said 'I will do it anyway'.

Valentijn Dhaenens:

What's contradictory with Richard is that he almost never collaborated with anyone before, so he was probably a little scared about getting involved with other artists, but he gave us so much freedom, half of his answers were 'I don't care', he likes to

add something but he's not afraid of going in a direction he's not familiar with... So I'm starting to think: isn't it a shame you haven't collaborated before, because it suits you very well? Or is it just the fact that we are very different, us being theater makers, you being a visual artist, that allows us to give each other so much freedom, because we're not specialists in each others fields? Working together with another visual artist might have been more complex.

Richard Jackson:

The answer to that is that I really do not care.

I don't like to make value judgments about art.

I enjoy working together with people and spending time with people that are very unlike me, because I feel like I can learn more from them. And I did that my whole life, I worked in construction, they never knew what I did, and I was able to learn a lot by working with them.

You know, like if we all sit around and we are all artists, we talk the same language, we can look at a painting on the wall that is just all blue and have a conversation about that... That's crazy, to get to that point where you are so specialized. And then somebody says 'my child can do that'... And you know what? That's true.

When I taught at the university I had a different idea about how people learn. I had the idea that they learn from each other and so that if you have 50 students instead of 10, you have more information in the room, and then all you have to do is set up an atmosphere. That's the key to the whole thing: setting up an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. And the other part is they have to trust you. Once they trust you they are OK.

Johan Pas:

To my opinion that's a perfect definition of an art school. It's just creating a safe community and conditions for formal and informal learning, for mutual exchange. Most of the students learn from each other more than they do from teachers and the teachers learn from the students as well.

When the conditions are fine, when you feel safe and secure, which is probably the same while rehearsing a play, then things happen by themselves. And when you say you don't care... of course you do care, you are an artist, but just by saying it you leave things open, you create open conditions instead of fixing it and saying how it has to be according to you.

Clara van den Broek:

In a way that is also how Charlotte works. She creates an atmosphere in which we just can breathe during rehearsal, and that's different from what we normally do. We normally train and push each other. Charlotte doesn't push, she lets us be.

Richard Jackson:

I'm always interested in the process more than the result in a way.

They have a rehearsal, then they change some things, work on it all day, maybe dropping and adding some parts... The experience that people share is interesting to me. I'm looking for more, new venues and opportunities, and this experience kind of made me think about other things.

Johan Pas:

Going back to your exhibition in S.M.A.K. Ghent, 'Ain't Painting a Pain', where you showed objects and installations: a lot of energy came from that exhibition, the installations gave a suggestion as that things could continue or go on.

And there was also a lot of humor in it. And humor is important, especially when you're talking about civil war, which is a serious topic, tragic and painful. I suppose with your painting on the scene you bring in some humor?

Clara van den Broek:

That's indeed also great about Richard, some kind of happiness and cheerfulness comes from him and from his work. We have a broken table in the middle of our stage made by Richard and when you think about Richard making it, it's in fact kind of funny, touching and tragic at the same time.

Valentijn Dhaenens:

During the performance the audience is sitting in a circle around us, wearing yellow overalls.

With those yellow suits they look funny and at the same time their individuality disappears. But as they surround us they are really involved on the floor where Richard works, as if they are part of a community, as if they're prisoners, soldiers, they are part of one group because they are all wearing the same uniform.

It started with an idea of monks meditating on civil war and there was also our association with researchers going to a disaster area. In the beginning we thought about white suits, but Richard doesn't like white, so now it's yellow suits.

However, this performance doesn't exist without the audience because they are really involved and there's a lot of participation, some of them become part in the massacre that Clara is doing, or have to help in 'killing', they assist the actors. So some nights things can go wrong a little bit or things won't work out like the night before, which is hard for me, cause I'm used to getting things right, having the show ready and then not changing it a lot the next few nights. But I'm starting to enjoy this unpredictability.

Clara van den Broek:

I feel supported by the audience. It looks like, as they all wear those yellow suits, they are willing to create a community that supports me.

Charlotte Vanden Eynde:

After the try outs several people admitted that wearing those suits made them feel save about participating, more than they normally would in such a situation. It's something about being anonymous, people not feeling insecure about how they look and what they wear.

Johan Pas:

It also kind of tells something about the uniform as a tool to make people do things they would never do in normal life, wearing a uniform makes you somebody else, with power maybe... It's a bit creepy.

Valentijn Dhaenens:

But it's a new fact that people also enjoy it. I didn't expect that, I thought some people would go like 'I really need to wear this stupid yellow too big suit with a zipper?', but most people seem to like it. They are anonymous, not able to check their phones but they seem to be relieved, even liberated they can't check their phones during 1,5 hour.

Clara van den Broek:

I remember you stressing on the fact that we should create a context in which people would maybe adopt an other way of looking. For instance just sitting and 'being there' when there's nothing to see. Because sometimes it is tense, but at other moments nothing is happening. So the audience is just sitting there, they can look at each other and at Richard's art work, find some rest, and let their imagination flow.

Johan Pas:

Can you, Charlotte, explain to us what was your approach for this performance, is it different from any other work you did before?

Charlotte Vanden Eynde:

I had similar experiences.

For me it was very much about having a lot of antennae, like trying to feel what both of them were thinking, feeling, wanting and what I could add to that and trying to guide that into something consistent. It's very interesting to me and, as said before, it comes down to creating an environment where things can happen. There was a lot of talking about how we saw and felt things and what we wanted to bring to the audience about civil war, violence and trauma, putting all that together in a performance.

I have off course a dance back ground, but it became immediately clear to me that they wanted to work more with actions and objects, and less with the body itself.

Johan Pas:

The work of Richard stayed virtual for a long time, but once it was clear what it was going to be, did it affect you in the process of creating? For instance the selection of the Guernica painting, such an iconical image, must have had an impact?

Charlotte Vanden Eynde:

We were already far in the process when Richard brought his ideas to the creation, so it was more like things coming together at that moment. But indeed, knowing that he was inspired by the Guernica, we did work with iconical images of war and suffering ourselves. We made our own versions of some of those photographs and paintings in live action.

Valentijn Dhaenens:

There is a beautiful tension now between the darkness that we developed on the civil war theme and the input of Richard which makes it light, bright and colorful. And this tension is the most beautiful thing for me now just because there's something perverse about it, but also: that's life.

If we would have done this just with the three of us, without Richard, it would have been very dark, with sensitivity of course, but the layer of paint that he throws over us has so much more meaning. It also makes you think differently. For example there's paint dripping from the ceiling in buckets. That's something sad, the roof is leaking, but at the same time those bright colors destroying Richard's Guernica painting are great to watch, the drops evolve into something very playful. That's what I find most exciting at this point: the tension between the very dark side and the playfulness.

Johan Pas:

Can there be beauty in war? Like Marinetti proposed war as a kind of esthetic experiment. Is it possible to say that war can be beautiful? Or is it per definition ugly? The fact that you as a painter, as actors, deal with war, are you pushing limits, seeking beauty in ugliness?

Didn't Picasso aestheticise war with his Guernica painting, didn't he translate tragedy into beauty?

Richard Jackson:

Beauty is relative. Some people see my work as really beautiful, but only isolated parts maybe. All the years that I've been a practicing artist, I've never had a critic that really liked my work. The beauty thing is kind of relative to what you bring to it. And I think it's the same with the play. You go in there with a different background than the person sitting next to you, and so you take something different away from it.

And with art it's the same thing. If you go in there with absolutely no knowledge, then you can't relate to it like i.e. someone with a degree in art history. I've always tried to have my art be something that you don't need a degree in art history to understand or appreciate, but that's kind of a difficult thing, because you are an artist and you can't play dumb, you can't escape your frame of reference, you can't pretend you don't understand cause you do.

Clara van den Broek:

The question about beauty is a very difficult one...

But one of the questions in the play, also a bit of a shocking question, is 'can we get closer together by violence?'. Can we come closer to each other by violence than by love? Which is also a possible interpretation of the book of Baricco. And it is what we do on stage as well: we change roles between offender and victim, but we also stick together, and there's violence, but also tenderness involved, which is touching I guess.

Valentijn Dhaenens:

Richard, you said something very sad about students wanting to be involved in the industry, that they're not interested anymore in things you find important.

Richard Jackson:

Not all of course. But I think it's because they are now all floating into LA. They can work there relatively cheap compared to other parts of the US.

But I'm to blame for a big part of it, because I taught at the university and there were lots of good real artists, Paul McCarthy, Nancy Rubins, Chris Burden, Charles Ray... And those people were attracting students from all over. And the students that the school put out were so successful and really great artists and then all the sudden everybody wanted to come to LA.

Johan Pas:

I remember LA becoming very hip. New York had always been the scene of contemporary American art since the 1940's. But then that changed with your generation, and the whole west coast post punk scene, kind of iconoclastic punky rock n roll messy style became like the LA style and in the nineties that attracted a lot of people, I guess it was much more fun than New York. But I can imagine it was kind of a hype and if something peaks it also slows down again after a while.

Richard Jackson:

Yeah... All the teachers retired or quit because they didn't need to teach. It's difficult to find important good artists to teach today. Some of them don't want to do it. And then they say 'well, he's not a great artist, but he's a good teacher'... But how the hell can you learn from a bad artist?

Clara van den Broek:

The piece will be shown in another circuit than the regular theaters, more in an art context. We wanted this performative context and the context of visual arts, because we expect that to challenge us. I also think people will look at the performance with a more open mind when not played in regular theaters, because in a theater they expect a story, they expect playing...

Charlotte Vanden Eynde:

I doubt if it will change a lot. You are a theater group, so there is this expectation apart from the setting. I think it would be even more interesting to try different contexts.

Clara van den Broek:

I remember one of the big challenges was the relationship to the audience. Because in visual art this is totally different than in theatrical art. In visual art you have individuals or smaller groups as an audience, in theater it's more like groups

of hundred persons and more. So we had lots of questions about the relation to the audience, do we want them to be mobile, or do we give them a seat etc.

Valentijn Dhaenens:

To me it did a lot during the creating process, knowing that we were going to perform in other places than regular theaters. Cause a theater for me consists of two zones, there's the zone where someone is performing and the zone where someone is sitting and wants to be given something. And performing in spaces where you don't have this clear mark between audience and performers is very different, it's liberating.

5 **PRESS PHOTOS**

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You can download scenic high resolution images via:_

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login: korneel@skagen.be paswoord: persmap

6 CURRICULA OF THE CONTRIBUTORS

Richard Jackson (Sacramento, 1939) is an American visual artist who lives in Los Angeles, California. He studied Art & Technology at the Sacramento State College from 1959 to 1961 and taught sculpture at UCLA Los Angeles from 1989 to 1994. Since the 1970s he has been a prominent figure in American contemporary art. Influenced by both abstract expressionism and action painting, Jackson explores a performative process that wants to increase the potential of painting by improving technical conventions. For Jackson, paint is not a tool to create a representative image, but it is used as a ubiquitous liquid that is splashed and sprayed over the surface of its installations. Jackson wants to reposition painting as a daily experience. That is why he uses domestic environments and banal human activities as the basis for his installations.

The international interest in his work is evident from numerous prominent exhibitions, among others at the Lyon Biennale in 1997 and the Venice Biennale in 1999. The retrospective "Ain't Painting a Pain" toured in 2013 to S.M.A.K. in Ghent, the Museum Villa Stuck in Munich and the Orange County Museum of Art in Newport Beach.

Clara van den Broek (Sint Niklaas, 1974) studied Roman Languages, Cultural Studies and Philosophy at the KULeuven, and graduated in 2000 from the drama program Dora van der Groen, Royal Conservatory of Antwerp. In the same year she founded the theater collective SKaGeN together with her classmates.

Since then she has been playing, writing and creating theater productions, some 30 now, including the monologues Aantekeningen uit het Ondergrondse (SKaGeN), Heimwee naar Tirgu Mures (Cinderella) and De Vloed (SKaGeN), and the ensemble pieces Zeestuk, Pardon!, Deurdedeurdeur, Alles van Eva, CCC, The Best of Alma Mahler, Laura Exterieur, Wonderland, Winterkant, IO (SKaGeN), Ziek van Dood Zijn, Husbands and Wives (The Time), De Wet van Engel, Van Alles naar Allen (The Cow), Allemaal Indiaan (Les Ballets C de la B and Nieuwpoortheater). She presents the French version of De Vloed, Raz de Marée, during the Avignon 2019 theater festival.

In addition Clara van den Broek is coordinator of the Acting specialization at the Conservatory of Antwerp, and chairwoman of the research group Performance Practice in Perspective at the same institution.

Van den Broek was a dance critic at the newspaper De Morgen from 1998 to 2002, and from 1997 to 2003 an editor at the stage art magazine Etcetera. In 2006 she published the novel Aarde at De Geus, followed by a number of short stories. In 2012 she published Sommige Dingen vallen in het Water after a publication series in episodes in De Morgen.

Van den Broek also works occasionally as a freelance publicist. In the summer of 2016 she conducted an interview series on migration, 'Van Hier en Ginder', commissioned by the newspaper De Morgen.

Valentijn Dhaenens (Ghent, 1976) is a theater and film actor. He graduated in 2000 as a master in Dramatic Art at the Conservatory of Antwerp. He is co-founder of SKaGeN.

He also participated in performances of various other large and smaller theater groups, and was seen on television and in films as Meisje (Dorothée Van Den Berghe), Koning van de wereld en S. (Guido Henderickx), Mr. Nobody (Jaco Van Dormael), Copacabana (Marc Fitoussi), After Day (Nico Leunen) and De onbaatzuchtigen (Koen Dejaegher). In De helaasheid der dingen (Felix Van Groeningen) he played the role of Gunther, more recently in Girl (Lukas Dhont) he played the role of psychiatrist.

His breakthrough in theater came with BigMouth: an ode to the speech. This was followed by the successful monologue SmallWar. Both productions toured worldwide. His monologue Unsung (SKaGeN/KVS) is still an international success. In 2018 he won a Fringe First with Unsung, one of the most important awards at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Charlotte Vanden Eynde (België, 1975) is a dancer and choreographer, based in Ghent. She studied contemporary dance at P.A.R.T.S. in Brussels.

Since 1997, she has been creating highly personal choreographies and performances, focusing on the body with a strong sculptural and imaginative sensibility. Her early works 'Benenbreken', 'Zij Ogen' and 'Vrouwenvouwen' revolved around vulnerability, intimacy and femininity. In 'Lijfstof' she explored the body as object/matter and in 'MAP ME' video images were projected on the body as on a canvas. She pursued her movement research in the group piece 'Beginnings/Endings', the solo's 'I'm Sorry It's (Not) A Story' and 'Shapeless', and in various site-specific performances and improvisation solos. Her last work 'Deceptive Bodies' displays an iconography of the theatrical body and is also shown in exhibition spaces.

She often collaborates with musicians (Nicolas Rombouts, Christian Mendoza) and theater makers (Dolores Bouckaert, SKaGeN, De Roovers, Jan Decorte) and danced in pieces by Marc Vanrunxt and Ugo Dehaes. Additionally, she gives advice to other artists and conducts workshops based on her own artistic practice.

7 INFO & CONTACT

- The performance TILL IT'S OVER takes about 90 minutes without a break.
- For all questions regarding the production you can mail to korneel@skagen.be or call the number +32 485 63 08 74 (general management).
- Free tickets for members of the press or programmers can be obtained by reserving in advance at the address above.
- SKaGeN can be followed via its website skagen.be or via facebook.com/SkaGeNtheatre.
- For more information about the productions, or for a dive in the past, you can now visit the online SKaGeN archive via <u>www.skagen.be</u>
 or use the direct link: <u>http://www.skagen.be/en/voorstellingen/till-its-over</u>