

## 1. PRESENTATION

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### **CULTURE COMMUNE**

**intermunicipal association for cultural and artistic development.**

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Culture Commune, intermunicipal association for cultural and artistic development located in the ex-mining area of Pas-de-Calais (North of France), was created in 1990 by 27 cities, as a result of a survey and a prefiguration initiated by the Departemental Council of Pas-de-Calais, supported by the Regional Council of Nord - Pas-de-Calais, and the DRAC Nord - Pas-de-Calais (decentralized sub-branch of the Ministry of Culture). Now composed of 34 member-cities (385 000 inhabitants), the association shines forth on a territory of nearly 700 000 inhabitants, and has recently been settled (since septembre 1998) on a new place : the Fabrique Théâtrale de la Base 11/19 in Loos-en-Gohelle.

That prefiguration was a result of a feasibility survey, initiated by the Departemental Council of Pas-de-Calais and entrusted to ORCEP and ANFIAC (public financed bodies for surveys and professional cultural training) in 1988. The initial order coming from the Departemental Council of Pas-de-Calais was on the feasibility of a festival for and in the ex-mining area of Pas-de-Calais. A preliminary survey among a sample of cities made rather appear the necessity of starting up an analysis on how to set up an artistic and cultural development project suitable with the aims and the needs (evolutions and shifts in the economical, social, educational, cultural and urban regeneration fields) of this area affected by the crisis (progressive stopping – from the 60's up to the end of the 80's – of the coalmining mono-industry after 1,5 century of prosperity).

## **Culture Commune is considered as an original structure because of its double ambition :**

- On the one hand, to create an operational cultural structure with a multidisciplinary artistic project focused on works of art and contemporary creation, also with a cultural project guided by the ambition to transform deeply the cultural practices of populations, especially but not exclusively, young people and "disadvantaged" people.
- On the other hand, to experiment with a real "intermunicipal" dimension through a global project of a territory (the 34 cities represent a wide territory : 50 km from west to east, 40 km from north to south), based on sharing analysis and fundamental aims about solidarity and complementarity of new cultural policies to be set up and cultural facilities to be created.

Year after year, Culture Commune keeps on playing its role in the thought, the concertation, the impulse of a cultural move inside the ex-mining area, and thus participate to its development and its structuration.

### **A mobilising status and way of working**

Each city is represented as a founding-member (by the mayor or one of his deputy mayors) in the Board of Directors. They all have an equal power of decision, whatever the size of their city (from 300 inhabitants up to 36 000 inhabitants). The Departemental Council of Pas-de-Calais, the Regional Council of North Pas-de-Calais and the DRAC North Pas-de-Calais are founding members too, but also "membres de droit" (*de jure* members) in the Board of Directors.

In 1992, by the transformation of the statutes, the Board of Directors adopted a charter and opened the association to new additional members : associations and partner-structures, "relais" (people representing the audience) and firms, who elect every year, during the General Assembly, their own representatives sitting in the Board of Directors.

The "Bureau" is composed of members elected by the Board of Directors. The President is elected by the Board of Directors and is chosen among the representatives of the cities.

The present President is Mr Alain Bavay, assistant-mayor of the town of Eleu-dit-Leauwette, Vice-President for "Politique de la Ville" at the Cities-community of Lens/Liévin.

### **The member-cities are :**

Aix Noulette, Avion, Barlin, Béthune, Billy-Berclau, Bruay-la-Buissière, Bully-les-Mines, Douvrin, Eleu-dit-Leauwette, Fouquières-lez-Lens, Givenchy-en-Gohelle, Gouy-Servins, Grenay, Hénin-Beaumont, Hersin-Coupigny, Hulluch, Lens, Libercourt, Liévin, Loison-sous-Lens, Loos-en-Gohelle, Mazingarbe, Meurchin, Montigny-en-Gohelle, Noyelles-les-Vermelles, Noyelles-sous-Lens, Pont-à-Vendin, Sains-en-Gohelle, Sallaumines, Servins, Vendin-le-Vieil, Villers au Bois, Vimy, Wingles.

**Culture Commune-Scène Nationale du Bassin Minier du Pas-de-Calais gets subsidies from :**

- The Ministry of Culture – DRAC Nord/Pas-de-Calais
- The Regional Council of Nord/Pas-de-Calais
- The Departemental Council of Pas-de-Calais
- The Cities-community of Lens/Liévin
- The member-cities.

**Specific actions are also supported by :**

- The FEDER, INTERREG IIIA (European Community)
- The Ministry of Culture – DMDTAS (music, dance, theatre and spectacles direction)
- The Ministry of National Education
- The "Politique de la Ville (Contrat de Plan Etat/Région)"
- The Departemental Council of Pas-de-Calais for "diffusion aid" and "departemental program of public reading"
- The Cities-community of Hénin/Carvin
- The Cities-community of Artois Comm.
- The "ONDA"
- The association "Droit de Cité"
- EDF GDF Services and EDF Foundation

Culture Commune is a partner to

- "L'Imprimerie du Centre/Jeudi Rêve" (Liévin)
- "ADCS"
- "Bassin Minier UNESCO"
- "Mission Bassin Minier"

and a member to

- "Autre(s)pARTS – Acteurs Unis pour la Transformation, la Recherche et l'Expérimentation (Sur les relations entre) Populations, ART et Société"
- "Artoiscope"

**Cultural policies of the cities are more and more ambitious, relying on a closed partnership with Culture Commune**

The cultural and artistic development of the ex-mining area depends on the commitment of each city, in a new cultural policy, in accordance with the ambitions of evolution of the cultural and social life of its citizens.

Thus, since 1991, after two years of prefiguration, Culture Commune intervenes as an adviser with an individualized approach towards the cities and helps them to set up a part of their cultural policies. This complex approach requires valuations and determination from all (Culture Commune's staff, mayors, professional and amateur partners in each city).

Developping with Culture Commune specific artistic lines in each one of the cities (inside their own cultural policy) was a prior condition to make emerge intermunicipal artistic actions.

As a matter of fact, we don't take charge of realizing the cities' whole cultural policy. We determine with them one or two lines that we develop in partnership.

## 2. THE CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC PROJECT OF CULTURE COMMUNE

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Our approach, from the beginning of "Culture Commune's adventure", has consisted in **creating "by fair means or foul and in every possible places"**, conditions of meetings between works and an audience, but also between artists and a population.

**Our artistic project and activity were developed from several artistic disciplines for two essential reasons at the beginning :**

- The professional artistic offer was widely "underdeveloped" in all the artistic disciplines in this area, and particularly in theater, circus and street arts, contemporary dance, current and world musics, visual arts.
- The aims of complementarity and intermunicipal cooperation implicate to develop cultural projects with all the cities.

**Moreover, choices were clearly enunciated from the beginning :**

- Programming of performing arts privileging contemporary forms and repertoire.
- Participation to professional artistic creation in every artistic discipline.
- Development of all kinds of presence of artistic teams, in order to provoke the meeting and to go deeply into relations between artists and population.

There is not doubt that the artists we work with, want to create in an interdisciplinary way. Nevertheless, the common work, research, experimentation, meeting between different artists isn't as frequent as ever.

Developping and training an audience for theatre, dance, music... is a fundamental stake for creation and programming of works, as well as breaking barriers between the audiences, in a society victim of a social fracture and of a cultural segmentation.

Affirming an artistic project based on such priorities of programming and interdisciplinary creation can't be enough to break barriers between the audiences. Through our strategy of audiences' development, we also have the ambition to mix people, whatever their social condition, their geographic origin, their age and their centers of artistic interest.

**La Fabrique Théâtrale du 11/19 contributes to the implementation of Culture Commune's artistic project on several points :**

- The artistic creation.
- The durable accompaniment of an artistic team, Cie Hendrick Van Der Zee for several years (since 1998). At this time, we continue this accompaniment with several companies (Pietragalla Compagnie, VIESAVIES, Théâtre de la Fiancée, Théâtre K...)
- The presence of many others artistic teams (professional or amateur) during shorter periods.
- The setting up of laboratories for interdisciplinary artistic researches (with stage directors, choreographers, composers, playwrights, multimedia artists...).
- The setting up of "Rendez-vous de la Fabrique" (works in progress, rehearsals, results of training sessions... ), meetings and confrontations times open to the public.

**The Multimedia Ressources Center is :**

- On the one hand, a multimedia center for the inhabitants living in the quarters and the cities closed to the base 11/19.
- On the other hand, a crossroads of multimedia projects including an artistic, cultural, citizen dimension and coming from all the ex-mining area.

For this purpose, the Multimedia Ressources center is permanently open to the public (relais/individual members, non profit making associations, partner-structures, amateur and professional artists...).

Its functions are :

- The initiation and providing with tools and informations about the NITC (New Interactive Technologies of Communication).
- The reception, the support and the accompaniment of projects including the NITC.
- The setting up of training sessions and cultural actions with an "intermunicipal" dimension.
- The exploration, with the artists, of the use of Technologies of Communication and Information's tools in relation to performing arts.

The Multimedia Ressources center has an half-professional equipment which allows to create in the fields of video, sound an electronic music, three and two dimensions picture, CD-Rom, web sites, ...

**The Theatral Library Ressources Center** (located in the same place as the Multimedia ressources center) is a place for discovering texts written by contemporary theatral authors. It hosts a series of texts coming from "ANETH – Aux Nouvelles Ecritures Théâtrales" (a national network dedicated to the promotion of contemporary theatral authors), completed by many other texts, notably for children-targeted theatre, but also a selection of journals and CD-Roms.

Its functions are :

- Providing with books to be consulted on the spot, with typescripts to be photocopied or published texts to be ordered.
- The setting up of training sessions with authors in residency, publishers and writers.

In the same place is now located a **Ressources Center dedicated to "Memory and Artistic Creation"**.

Culture Commune, intermunicipal association for cultural and artistic development, gathers 34 cities located in the ex-mining area of Pas-de-Calais (North of France). As a multi-/trans-disciplinary cultural structure (street arts, circus, contemporary dance, hip hop dance, theatrical writing, children-targeted arts, tale, multimedia, current and world musics, theatre), Culture Commune sets up artistic actions (strongly interdisciplinary oriented) and intermunicipal cultural projects (creations, co-realizations, co-productions, artists in residency, artistic trainings: workshops, courses, training to conception/realization of projects, training to mediation, programming of spectacles, sensibilisation and broadening of audiences). About 150 actions per season.

Since 1998, Culture Commune has been settled in la Fabrique Théâtrale (three rehearsal rooms), located in the “Base 11/19” (a former industrial coal mining derelict land) in Loos en Gohelle : a new place dedicated to the artistic research, creation and training. The association entered in partnership with an artistic team for several years (Cie Hendrick Van Der Zee – theater, dance, circus, video) and now accompanies several companies : Pietragalla Compagnie, VIESVIES, Théâtre de la Fiancée, Théâtre K... Rendez-vous with the public are regularly proposed with the artists working in the Fabrique. In this place, a Multimedia Ressources Center, a Contemporary Theatre Library Ressources Center and a Ressources Center dedicated to “Memory and Artistic Creation” have also been created.