

What
can
we
do
with
a
page?

Atelier
Bozar
x
Surrealism

HIDDEN

but here the
LIGHT

NEVER
is surface

Atelier Bozar
x
Surrealism

What can we do with a page?

facilitated by

Short Pieces That Move!

&

Futures of Europe

PREFACE

Atelier Bozar is a joint initiative of Bozar Exhibitions and Audience Engagement. It aims to open up this Centre for Fine Arts to art schools and, in doing so, to the artists of the future. This publication records its first iteration, which took place on 24 April, 2024. The backdrop to the day of discussions was the Bozar exhibition *Histoire de ne pas rire. Surrealism in Belgium*. In programming both the exhibition and Atelier Bozar, we were interested in examining the role of art in society and its potential for changing our world views by looking at parallels between the challenges faced by the Surrealists a century ago and the challenges that artists face today.

To develop this Atelier Bozar, we invited writer, researcher, and educator Vivian Sky Rehberg, who guided both our team and the participants through this process with care, intelligence, and enthusiasm. Vivian in turn invited two collectives, bringing together a mixture of artists and researchers to offer new ways of working together.

Six Belgian art schools participated in the Atelier—ArBA-EsA, ESA Le 75, ESA Saint-Luc Liège, KASK & Conservatorium Gent, Sint Lucas Antwerpen, and LUCA School of Arts Brussel—with both students and teachers from different courses and practices taking part, many coming together for the first time. When educational

systems and cultural institutions are becoming increasingly strictly formatted, it is important to create moments and spaces for exchange that can inspire new conversations and ways of thinking.

We would like to thank all those who took part and all those who made Atelier Bozar possible.

Zoë Gray
Director of Exhibitions

À quoi peut-on faire servir
une main,
une bouche,
un œil,
un pied,
la peau,
l'homme,
la femme,
un miroir,
une chaise,
une corde,
des ciseaux,
etc. ?

Il s'agit de donner aux êtres, aux
objets, une fonction, un usage différent
de l'habituel.

For what can we use
a hand,
a mouth,
an eye,
a foot,
skin,
man,
woman,
a mirror,
a chair,
a rope,
scissors,
etc. ?

It's all about giving a function to beings, to
objects, a different use
than usual.

Paul Nougé

INTRODUCTION

What can we do with a page?

This short text by Belgian surrealist Paul Nougé, glimpsed on a wall of the exhibition *Histoire de ne pas rire. Surrealism in Belgium*, inspired my concept and title for the pedagogical event Atelier Bozar x Surrealism: 'What can we do with a page?' Given this unprecedented occasion, when dozens of students, teachers, and administrators from six Belgian art academies gathered alongside members of Bozar's curatorial and education teams to collaboratively explore legacies of Surrealism, I wanted us to wonder 'for what can we use' higher arts education and the art centre, and how might we give them 'a different use than usual'? I decided that during the Atelier Bozar x Surrealism day, facilitated by two collectives of artists, designers, curators, writers, and scholars, we should try to suspend deep-rooted institutional expectations and affiliations, disciplinary inclinations, statuses, and expertise, and simply co-creatively respond to the question: *What can we do with a page?*

This publication offers a modest impression of that April day. In the morning, artists Annabelle Binnerts, Linus Bonduelle, and Ash Kilmartin—from the reading, writing, and publishing collective *Short Pieces That Move!*—led groups of participants through experiments with language (we all used English as an imperfect *lingua franca*, as well as our multiple dominant languages). Working with writing prompts, existing texts, and elements of chance, *Short Pieces That Move!* enabled participants to create their own personal and localised responses via instruction, carbon-copying, appropriation, and annotation. In the afternoon, Julian Hanna and Michelle Kasprzak, from the multi-disciplinary project *Futures of Europe*, gave brief lectures on the manifesto as a historical and contemporary form, and the use of subtext, or hidden messages, as an invitation to explore the form further. From there, participants gathered in small groups to devise and enact *tableaux-vivants* inspired by textual provocations, before engaging in two writing workshop rounds, facilitated by *Futures of Europe*'s Simone Ashby, Julian Hanna, Michelle Kasprzak, Alwin de Rooij, and Sonja Rozental. These activities encouraged engagement with the Belgian surrealist publication *Correspondance*, which served as a common material reference throughout the day. *Correspondance*, first published by Nougé,

Camille Goemans, and Marcel Lecomte in 1924, and included in the Bozar exhibition, consisted of written tracts printed on single sheets of different colour A4 paper, which were distributed by mail to select recipients. We too used the A4 page as a space for experimentation, communication, and distribution of individual and collective ideas, positions, and representations.

We focused our brief time together on the individual, collaborative, and collective work of listening, thinking, speaking, and making. We live in an increasingly sophisticated, tech-mediated communication age—far from that of the surrealists. However, the participants' enthusiastic engagement in *Atelier Bozar x Surrealism*, and their incredibly diverse responses to the facilitators' invitations, as found in this publication, reveal that in just one day, entire worlds can be shaped, spelled out, collaged, captioned, and contained within a single A4 page. As a welcome into those worlds, what follows is a partial record of our collective response to the question, 'What can we do with a page?'

Vivian Sky Rehberg

WORKSHOP

with

Short Pieces That Move!

Annabelle Binnerts, Linus Bonduelle,
and Ash Kilmartin



11

The workshop began with a brief presentation about our Short Pieces That Move! collective, and about our workshops, through which we aim to encourage shared and accessible writing practices.

This was followed by an introduction to the first text we would be working with: 'The Poet' by Diane Williams. We read this short story aloud a couple of times and discussed the ways it 'moves' in its form and imagery. Using the insights we had collectively gained as prompts, we started off with some warm-up writing exercises.

As we became more comfortable with putting text onto paper, we started to work collaboratively, moving and rearranging the pages of our writing in front of us. We edited, added to, scrapped, and jumbled each other's texts together, which amounted to a myriad of 'short pieces'.

CANNON PULP

He pulls up the sieve and ~~shakes~~ it slightly, making sure to get an even coating of the pulp. But these holes are the size of cannons!
CAN THESE CANNONS FALL THROUGH THE NEWLY SIEVED PAPER?

We then moved on to the second published text of the session and, in the spirit of surrealism, added an element of chance: our reading would be selected by rolling a die. Each number corresponded to a different text and, as a result, to different communal writing prompts.

Our options were:

1. Jean-Pierre Brisset - 'Les dents, la bouche'
2. Jenny Lewis - excerpt from *Gilgamesh Retold*
3. Kathryn Scanlan - excerpt from *Aug. 9 - Fog*
4. Lila Matsumoto - 'Nonnet for checked king'
5. Félix Fénéon - excerpt from *Novels in Three Lines*
6. Lydia Davis - 'Tropical Storm'

Once the die had been rolled, we read the corresponding text aloud twice and then discussed it together. Mimicking its moves, we sped through several short prompts, lyricising in sometimes less than 5 minutes!

Quatre mots dansent ensemble.
Quatre mots pensent, il semble.
qu'à trois ma pensée, ils sans bleus.

~~cas~~
cas tréma pensent le ~~rang~~ semble eux.
mais c'est un exemple





The final segment of the workshop allowed time for some final writing, without any prompts, and sharing work aloud. We closed the morning session with a reflection on the workshop experience.

While the participants replenished their energies at the banquet lunch, we gathered the various short pieces and taped them up on the wall. This hanging textual tapestry allowed for small moments of wonder and pondering for the rest of the day.

Like an empty room,
I, too, may one day become traditional music

Like a sideways manoeuvre,
I, too may one day become highly qualified

Like a glowing exit sign,
I, too, may one day become hard to find

Text moves a lot during our workshops. As pieces are passed around, it's easy to lose track of what you've written yourself. As a way to archive everyone's personal contributions that morning, all of us kept a carbon pad underneath our writing paper, which copied every swish of the pen during the workshop. See some of our favourites on the following pages →

Written in wet (working title)

I spread the varnish over the plate and press and push the plate into the mordant

Reading thinking chop-stellen out in names thinking drawing deciding decision etc -

But, it bites and you can't open the egg that it breaks and forms TRANS ^{forms and that delay} _{into your mind}

DELAY upon lay upon like a shoe that does not fit quite as it should fit like a tear in your tights within the first minutes of wearing them

like a pause like a potato peel like an indentation

LAZY OBNOXIOUS SMOOTH AS BUTTER GOOEY OVERQUALIFIED

categories

YESTERDAY

Art

like a spoon ^{too many days} _{overqualified} Spoon Flan

catastrophic "Ornate ribbon"

like yesterday smooth as butter like an indentation FUNCTIONAL, like a potato peel, too many one day become catastrophic pay Art, like a shoe that does not fit quite as it should fit, overdone like a pause, mashed yesterday smooth as butter very categories

Excerpt from a talk by Michelle Kasprzak

INTERLUDE

On the Belgian Surrealist publication *Correspondance*

Correspondance is full of insider information, subtle jokes, and, most importantly, uses the writing of others as a starting point, plagiarising and rewriting in order to create new meanings. It's impossible to speculate how exactly *Correspondance* was received in its day. The scholars can barely piece together enough context to make sense of the *Correspondance* tracts themselves, let alone find traces of direct reactions. But the lack of a measurable reaction does not mean there was none. Perhaps it is barely traceable, but by creating the space for encounter and speculation in the obscure and poetic style of the writing, plus the targeted list of recipients, *Correspondance* surely had an impact on its readers. Additionally, the use of plagiarism and re-writing the texts of others leads scholars to suggest that these techniques,

TO PERSIST

After Paul Nougé, Roland Barthes, André Breton

Science is crude, life is subtle. The practice of writing never has anything but the real as its object of desire, though the real is not representable.

Always flirting with failure, we can still write poetry. We can persist. Precisely because it persists, writing resists all that surrounds it: philosophies, discourses, sciences. We persist in attempting to express the most secret intentions, those determined by precious uncertainties.

Persistence means to smuggle in poetry, wherever we can: a tract, a text message, something heartfelt, handwritten, delivered into your hands.

We must re-dedicate ourselves to impossible love, unlucky audacity, revolts with no future. These are the only places where we can hope to live.

The monumental task of describing the real, the beautiful, the incredible: by default it becomes a half-articulated thought, not for lack of intention, or effort.

How easily we perceive the inherent, inevitable defeat of language as tragic, and yet: in that half-articulation, you create the space for another to encounter you. The key sings at the door of the unknown room.

In short, we must be periodically reborn, to re-read each other like a page of writing.

MICHELLE KASPRZAK.

Little Earth Mountain Press
Aardjesberg 33, Hilversum
1223 KL, The Netherlands

which were refined in *Correspondance*, can be seen as echoes in the concept of *détournement* of the Situationists and beyond.

Correspondance was trying to set up a conversation, an invitation to encounter by playing with words, stealing them out of your own mouth and feeding them back to you, goading you into reconsidering your position, asking you to think deeper about where words can take you. It played with meaning and ideas on a high level, inviting those whom it reached to play along in return through provocation—naming names of others, citing, and rewriting.



← Michelle's version of *Correspondance*

Excerpt from a talk
by Julian Hanna

INTERLUDE

On the manifesto form

The manifesto is an old form that has adapted well to digital culture. Manifestos are attention-seeking, clear, and provocative; they fuse simple, direct statements with bold images. They are built to make an impact, go viral, start a movement.

In other words, we already know the essential components of the manifesto. But what can manifestos do for us? How can they serve as a useful **MODE** of communication—an intervention—in the social / political / artistic realm?

Manifesto writing can generate radical new ideas by freeing us from careful speech in times of crisis. Where there is a need for urgent action and a dramatic change of course, there is a need for manifestos.

[...]

My question is: is the manifesto a genre beyond redemption, as some have claimed, for its history of violence (and misogyny)—or does it still hold promise?

25

On balance, I think it does more good than harm: a) to put into words what you as an individual or collective believe, and b) to provoke discussion and outline concrete actions leading to change. But it's also important to acknowledge the dark side.



WORKSHOP

with

Futures of Europe

Simone Ashby, Julian Hanna,
Michelle Kasprzak, Alwin de Rooij,
and Sonja Rozental



27

Warm-Up: Tableaux Vivants

We kicked off our session with an engaging exercise that encouraged us to act out provocative statements, getting us on our feet and sparking thoughts.

Groups of six to eight participants staged their own tableaux responding to two prompts: the first was one of the specially designed Surrealism centenary provocations (e.g. 'FORGET ABOUT YOUR GENIUS AND TALENTS', 'I DO AS I DANCE', etc.), developed for Futures of Europe's new PROVOCATION! card game series; and the second was a MANIFESTO tone card (e.g. 'RADICAL', 'URGENT', 'HOPEFUL'), which guided the rhetorical register to be used for addressing the audience.

Each group was encouraged to appoint a director to help them arrange their tableau, and to use any props they saw fit to include. The groups had ten minutes to compose their tableau, which they held for one minute to be photographed. Groups were also encouraged to decide on a title for their tableau.

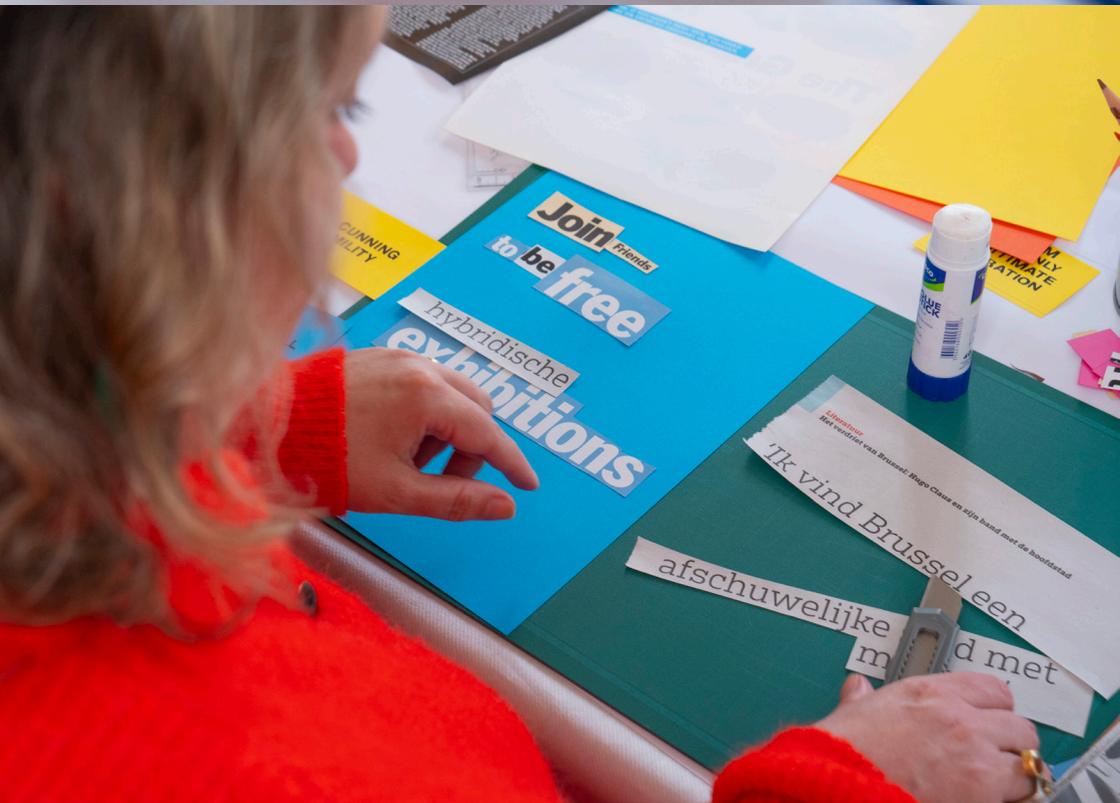
After each group's tableau was photographed, two to three groups volunteered to demonstrate their tableau for all the participants.

Round 1 of Writing

Answers without questions, inspired by 'BLUE 1',
from *Correspondance (1924–25)*

'BLUE 1' provides answers to a questionnaire about modernism without revealing the questions. Inspired by this technique and drawing from a diverse array of source materials offered in English, French, and Dutch, we explored the depths of our creativity by writing, collaging, and playing with language. In the spirit of Nougé, we obscured meanings and invited multiple interpretations with our new texts. By the end of this exercise, each participant had filled a single sheet of A4 paper with visually embellished answers to unknown questions.





Review of Round 2 of Writing

Pillaging and copying, inspired by 'PINK 2', and 'RED 16',
from *Correspondance (1924–25)*

As we wrapped up the first round, we took a moment to reflect on the exercises, evaluating our progress and identifying areas for future exploration. Next, 'RED 16' was distributed among the groups. Participants annotated the copies with their thoughts about its meaning, and then selected the most compelling annotations to craft into a manifesto or tract on artistic practice and creative action.

Editing, Visual Elaboration, Arranging

Working more collaboratively now, we moved into three groups. Each participant shared their sheets of A4 created so far, ready for transformation. We wondered:

Can any of these fit together to form a collection? Can we group them by theme? Can we cut and paste them together, plagiarise each other? Draw on the back. Draw on the front. Photocopy. Draw again. Edit, cross out, photocopy, edit again.

We photocopied, sketched anew, refined, and repeated each process on the works created.

See some of the A4s on the following pages →



HOW TO OBJECTIVELY A WOMAN 5 (classical approach)

1. The woman is passive and never acting.

2. THE ESSENCE of a woman is her erotic zones, thereby

should the focus be on those parts.

3. NEVER portray her head or limbs.

The woman can't walk away or speak

4. THE WOMAN is an object to look at, she doesn't look or watch for herself.

5. THE WOMAN can't be compared to all sort of things, as long as it's an object.

6. Depicting violence against women can help them prepare for real life.

7. The nakedness of a woman doesn't need a reason.

8. If women are included in any expo, they should be placed

in the back of the expo.

9. The only value a woman carries is her significant relations to a man, e.g. her husband or father.

X. A WOMAN should never type this message.

pour que les mots n
esoient pas la seu
le expression de s
bouches silencieus
use que tous n'aie
nt pas a prendre la
parole pour evite
r que d'autres se la
pproprient certain
ines mains porten
t un message que l
esseules connais
sent pour que la li
berte soit respect
tee il faudra just
e contempler lais
ser place ou prend
re place sans comp
araison

le temps



il passe

il passe

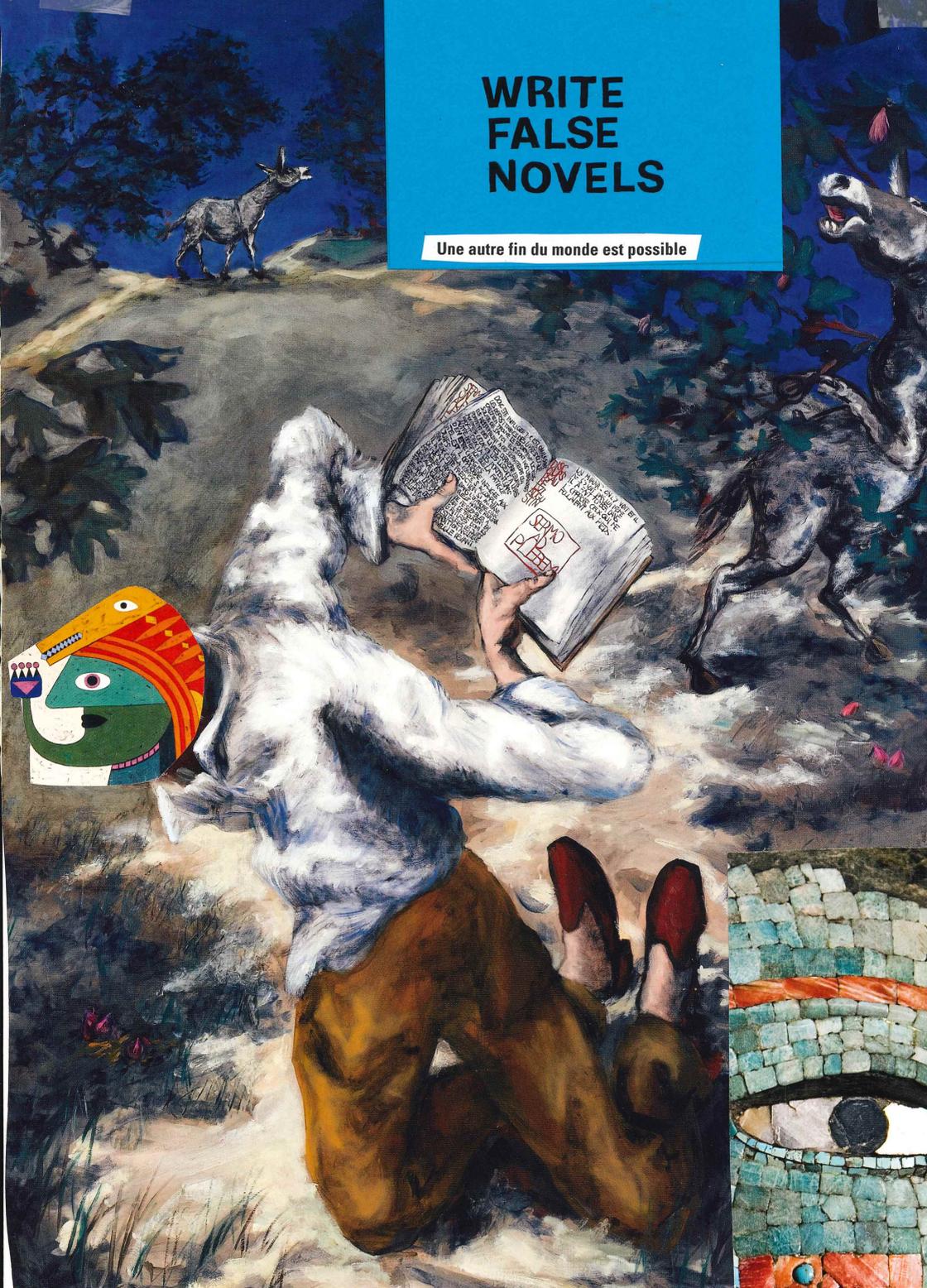
nous

perplexe

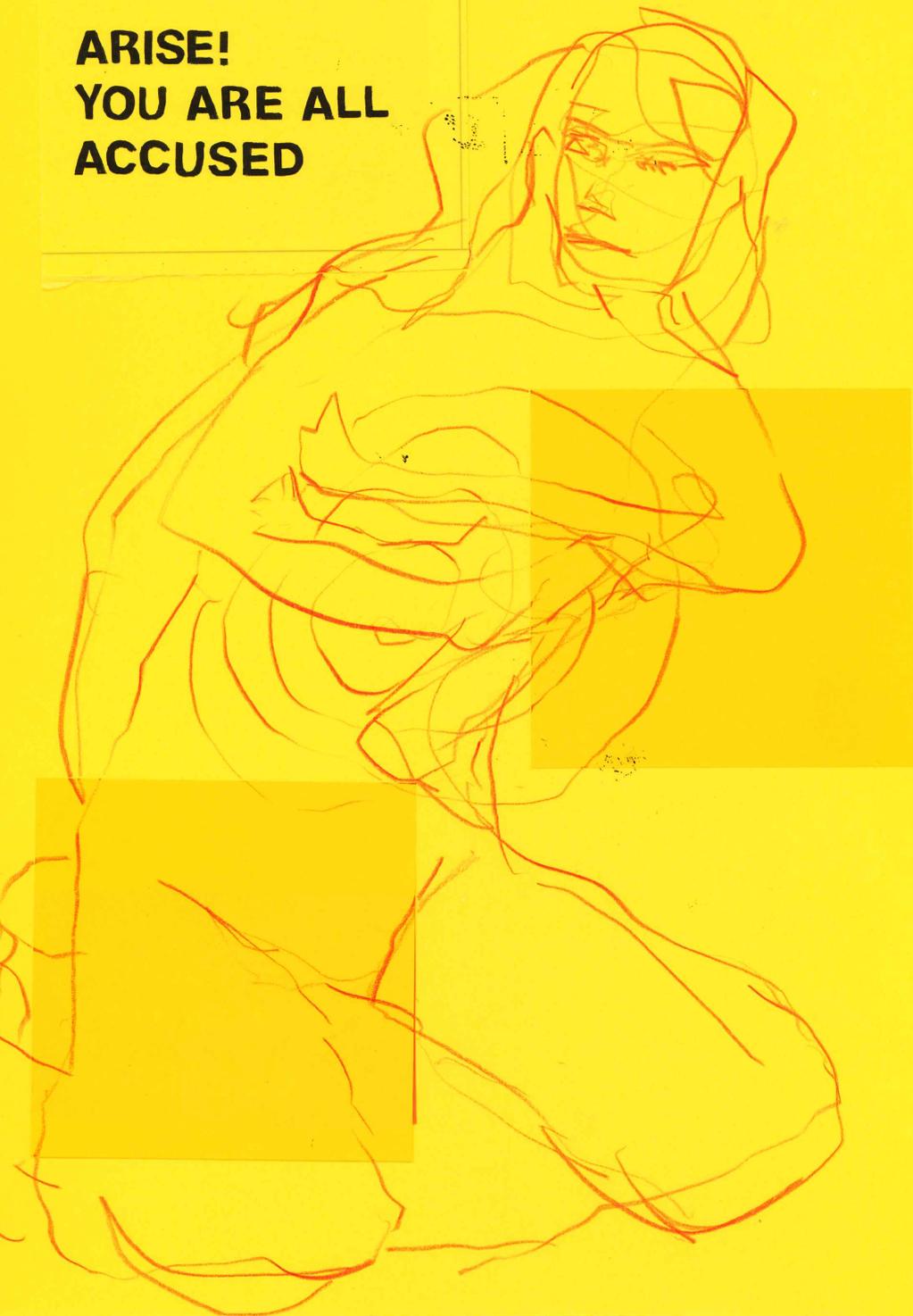
une seconde

WRITE FALSE NOVELS

Une autre fin du monde est possible



**ARISE!
YOU ARE ALL
ACCUSED**



we want to
periodically reborn.
a new love.
to let myself be borne
on by the force of any living life.
research
knowledges, cultures, and beliefs
experience
power, wisdom, flavor
sciences
are not eternal
History.
fate, discourse,
human
Economics)
desire, must die one of these days,

BIOGRAPHIES

Vivian Sky Rehberg

As an art writer, researcher, educator, and former curator, Vivian Sky Rehberg's primary areas of practice have been shaped by lifelong encounters with artists, scholars, and creative practitioners, alongside the interdisciplinary study of modern and contemporary art. VSR has published widely on modern and contemporary art and was a contributing editor and freelance correspondent for *frieze* magazine between 2006 and 2019. You'll find her work in the archives of existing and defunct magazines and online platforms (including *Artforum*, *Art Agenda*, *Mousse*, *A Prior*, and *e-flux*), and between the covers of artist monographs, exhibition catalogues, and various anthologies.

VSR was born in Passaic, New Jersey, and educated in the US (PhD, MA, BA in Art History). She has lived in Europe (Paris, Rotterdam, Brussels) for 28 years. After working in galleries, museums, and publishing in the US and Paris, VSR found her professional niche in art education. She has spent the past two decades working in international higher art education, in combined teaching and leadership roles. She is currently Senior Research Lecturer at the Willem de Kooning Academy/Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam, an associate of the Rotterdam Arts & Sciences Lab

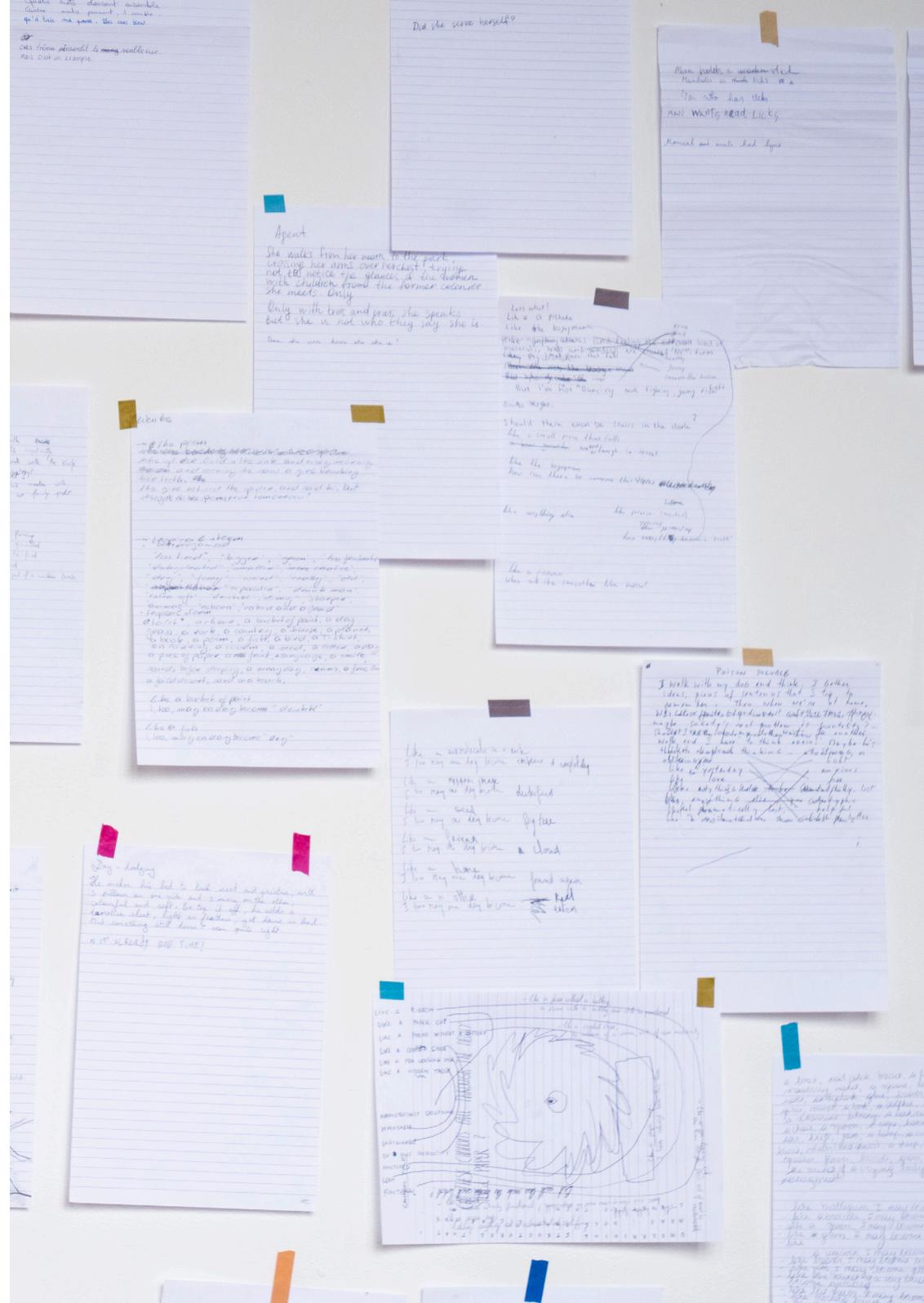
and the Research Centre WdKA, and a member of the Promiscuous Care Infrastructures Research Group. VSR has contributed to the visibility of a broad range of issues in contemporary art and arts education by creating and participating in public programmes in art academies, universities, art centres, and museums.

VSR's current research focuses on relationships between art, the psyche, education, and wellbeing. This research not only informs the direction of her writing projects, it drives her investment in her roles and actions as an educator, mentor, colleague, and advocate-at-large for the arts and culture.

Short Pieces That Move!

Short Pieces That Move! is a reading and writing group begun in 2018, in the context of the Masters Fine Art at the Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam. With the onset of COVID-19, the group moved out of the institution and onto a shared online pad. The group diversified, expanded, and now gathers regularly online to think, read, and write responsively together. Our primary interest is in how an existing piece of writing moves, its directions and turns, and how these moves can be modified or repurposed to initiate new movements, both in readers and the world. Our emphasis is on collective learning and permission-giving: the permission to experiment, sometimes for the first time, with writing, and to work with or against English as a material.

In 2022, five long-term SPTM! participants—Annabelle Binnerts, Linus Bonduelle, Kate Briggs, Ash Kilmartin, and Petter Dahlström Persson—initiated a publishing project under the same name, founded on the principles that publishing is possible (we are low-cost, anti-gatekeeping, and anti-prestige), and that editing, designing, printing, and making public all present further occasions for co-learning. The SPTM! collective works closely with new as well as experienced artists and writers to produce paired publications that speak to the authors' different concerns while also contributing to the collective's ongoing, open-ended movement inquiry.



Futures of Europe

Futures of Europe is an open-ended, multidisciplinary project that aims to encourage discussion and engagement to create new visions around possible futures of Europe. Faith in politics is at an all-time low across much of Europe, and hope for the future is collapsing as conspiracy theories and dystopian visions flourish. To counterbalance these trends, our actions tackle needs such as sustainability, climate action, countering extremism, the need for socio-political unity, action against racism, and finding positive and empowering uses of digitalisation, with the broader aim of helping to rebuild the commons in Europe and encouraging consensus on some of the most difficult issues we face. We want people to see that their words and ideas matter, that they have something of value to contribute to crucial debates, and that everyone living in Europe—north, south, east, or west; centre or periphery; rural or urban—has an important role to play in deciding our collective future. While prioritising collectivity, we also acknowledge the need to allow for a healthy divergence of views and productive friction within a respectful public setting. Collaborative manifesto writing, for example, provides citizens with a soapbox and a megaphone; the chance to reflect on our value systems, where they clash and where they meet; the chance to

challenge, but also to unite. Futures of Europe's core team includes Simone Ashby, Julian Hanna, Michelle Kasprzak, and Alwin de Rooij, all of whom work in art and design and humanities education. <https://www.futuresofeurope.org/>



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COLOPHON

Produced on the occasion of
Atelier Bozar x Surrealism: 'What can we do with a page?'
April 24, 2024

Curated by Vivian Sky Rehberg

Facilitated by Short Pieces That Move! (Annabelle Binnerts,
Linus Bonduelle, Ash Kilmartin) and Futures of Europe (Simone
Ashby, Julian Hanna, Michelle Kasprzak, Alwin de Rooij, and Sonja
Rozental)



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Bozar

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