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Village
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Compagnie Iden(C)ité

The Cobargo Village Artist Project

February-March-April 2018

The idea of the "Cobargo Village Artist project" is to encourage a new dynamic in Cobargo and stimulate links and exchanges between different "communities" or "groups" in the area, through a three-month residency of an international artist.

As I'm a theatre actor, director and writer, I'm interested in involving people in different creative experiences around the question of their multiple identities and to create with them a public event as a sort of "Cobargo Portrait".

To make the project open to a large range of people I'll try to propose different ways to take part and involve myself in different groups and events.

To understand your identity is to understand peace

My wish is to work during this three months around different aspects and approaches to identity. I look at the difference between external identities (your ID, your profession, how others see you,...) and internal identities (where you come from, which difficult experiences you crossed by, how you feel inside, in what you believe,...).

Two people may have different external identities, but their internal identities may be very similar, so this project is about breaking away barriers to allow these internal identities to connect.

In his book *In the Name of Identity : Violence and the Need to Belong*¹, the Libyan writer Amin Maalouf explains that each person is composed of a unique combination of affiliations or identities. If a group of people is seen only as having a single identity, it is because this affiliation is in danger and they have to stake out a space to defend it. For him, the problem of our society is there is no respect and knowledge of these multiple identities which could live well together (just like one person within their selves has multiple identities) if we could consider them as a richness for the community.

For me, the better people understand themselves, the better they can connect with others which in turn leads to less conflict within a community.

I think it's possible to create a process for civic and political reflection. Spaces for people, fun and artistic adventures, to deconstruct prejudices and create a common portrait of Cobargo.

There are **5 key parts** to creating the "portrait".

1: The workshops

I propose a theatrical exploration and creation during March and April for a group of young people ages 16 to 25, during the week-ends, and for a group of adults on Wednesday evenings. We will use theatre exercises to explore different aspects of the concept of identity starting from their own story. With the young people, we will maybe also use film making.

The idea is to create with these two groups a "Cobargo Theatrical Walking Tour" with a final at the School of Arts Hall, Friday 20th April.

¹ *In the Name of Identity : Violence and the Need to Belong*, Amin Maalouf, translate by Barbara, Time-Warner, 2001

2: The interviews

I propose to meet people who agree to be interviewed about their life course.

The idea is to understand their different belongings, their life steps and what has influenced their life choices, by starting from their family origins, their childhood, their education to their work, their political point of view, their actual position and living place, their hobbies and commitments.

If people agree, the sound and image of this interviews will be recorded and may be part (not in their entirety of course) of the "Cobargo Portrait". The interviews will be mainly for my research into identities.

3: The "objects museum"

A very fun and easy way to take part in the project is to bring me 3 different objects (that people will can get back at the end of the project).

One to represent you: not what you like or the sport you practice BUT something you could describe with some of characteristics that could describe you too.

And One to represent Cobargo for you.

And One to represent Australia for you.

I will collect these objects to make a final installation for the last event but maybe also to create a theatre performance.

4: The Crossfire evening

I propose to organize with a little group of people, an evening at the Well Thumbed Book Shop in Cobargo around the French theatre play *Croisades*. This very beautiful and relevant play considers the question of wars (war for religion, war for money, war for ideas,...) by following different characters in different places, at different periods, some of them young, some of them dead.

"Ismail, Bella, Krim and Yonathon are teenagers. They quarrel, have sex, smoke joints, love, hate, kill and die in Bierut, Hiroshima, Ireland, Iraq, Bosnia..."

Written by the French playwright Michel Azama and translated by the British playwright Nigel Gearin, *Crossfire* is a "heart stopping play about tumbling through the checkpoint of life and death warzones everywhere and at all times."

The idea of the evening is to read some parts of the text in French and in English, to screen the short movie I've done in Paris at the end of March 2016 (just after the bombs attacks in Brussels), and to open a discussion around the problem of identities and conflicts.

5: The final creation

I'm not sure yet what will be possible but I'll try to relate my experience here and my own vision of Cobargo by a personal creation, using maybe object theatre, film, dance, visual installation... which will be part of the final event at the end of April.

Aurelia Monfort

20th February 2018

Cobargo