

OPEN CALL DE SPIL – CLOWN COLLEGE



Get inspired by the circus past and create a short clown act for circus festival ‘de groote stooringe’ during 4 paid residencies with great coaches

Are you curious about the circus past? Are you interested in the clown tradition, forgotten artists, the classic entre acts, what they got up to in the past? Are you excited to get busy with all this old material, turn it into something new, into your own clown number? This can be a solo, duo or trio.

De Spil is looking for **six professional circus artists** who want to draw inspiration by the circus past and do their own thing with it: create a clown number (5 to 10 min) during 4 paid residencies, to present it together with a group scene during the ‘graduation show’ of Clown College at circus festival ‘de groote stooringe’ in Roeselare (sat 21 and sun 22 September 2024).

What we have to offer

1. Inspiration day

The circus history research- and expertise team presents an inspiration day on Tuesday 23rd of Jan 2024 at De Spil to get the creation process starting. Tailored to your profile and first points of interest, this team will present a package of material that might be of use for you to browse through. This could be a mix of old photos, objects, costumes, videos, posters, articles, stories, ... After this inspiration day the team stays stand-by to answer your questions or to discover with you possible answers.

2. Paid residencies

We plan four residencies of five days each between January and September 2024. Coaches will work with the artists on their clown number and on the group scene of the 'graduation show' you'll play at the festival.

During the residencies we offer you meals, accommodation (if needed), transport costs and a fee according to the Flemish Collective Labor Agreement for the Performing Arts.

As main coaches of this creation project, Eva Kahan and Aurelia Brailowsky guide you through the process to find the funniest side of you and help you to express yourself, communicate with the audience and be guided by its laughter. Eva and Aurelia will always be available as exterior eyes: they will share what they feel, what they see, what they think when you are performing on stage.

Eva and Aurelia coach residence 1 and residence 4. They will also be present as participating coaches during residency 2 and 3 so that they can follow up on the creation of your clown number. Eva and Aurelia remain on standby between the residency periods. You can send them videos and/or ask for feedback when you are stuck. At the end of each residency, they will give you clear focus points or suggestions that can give the creation process direction.

residency 1 (Monday 12th – Friday 16th of February 2024 at De Spil Roeselare)

Coaches Eva Kahan (BE) and Aurelia Brailowsky (MX/FR) – creation first material number
Each residency will end with an intimate performance moment. Matinées clown workshop with Eva, trying out first ideas with Aurelia in the afternoons. Tune in the project, find your own clown frequency.

residency 2 (Tuesday 9th – Saturday 13th of April at De Spil, Roeselare)

Coach Mickaël Leguen (FR) – 'la cascade' or burlesque slapstick
'La cascade' is a demanding and delicate technique. Stumbling, falling, messing around, being clumsy, ... it can easily become a bit awkward or even dangerous. But performed well, with precision, almost natural, it can become a fantastic tool to provoke laughter and to engage your audience.

residency 3 (Monday 15th – Friday 19th of April at De Spil, Roeselare)

coach Christine Rossignol-Dallaire (FR) – 'art clownesque'
As a renowned and experienced coach in the 'art clownesque', Christine helps to shape your number.

between April and September – 'rendez-vous' with Eva and Aurelia
Because of the lengthy period between residency 3 and 4 each clown number can directly arrange an appointment or 'rendez-vous' with Eva and/or Aurelia to work on the number. You can mutually agree on

date and location.

residence 4 (Monday 16th – Friday 20th of September 2024 at De Spil Roeselare; Friday 20th of September try-out)

Creation of show "Clown College". Creation of one collective scene. We work with 'Monsieur Loyal' (Bram Dobbelaere), the presenter or host of the 'graduation show' Clown college.

3. Support

Tailored to the needs of each number, we will look within budget, reason and practical feasible: technical support, certain objects, or props, ...

4. Costume

Inspired by the circus past and in consultation with the artists, costume designer Aline Breucker (BE) will create the costume for the number. She will be present at the residencies for chats and try-outs.

5. Playing

We plan to have at least one try-out during this creation process. The première will take place on Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd of September 2024 during festival 'de groote stooringe'.

The clowns will present their number in a cabaret formula and in the artistic context of a 'final graduation show' of Clown College: next to their graduation number they will also perform in a group scene. Mr. Loyal presents this unique moment live.

6. Clown number

At the end of this creation journey you will have a special clown number with a costume and props. Of course, what you do with the number afterwards is up to you. You can decide to tour with it, rework it or use it as a starting point for a full show or another act.

What we ask

In return we ask you to engage fully and to complete this process to the end goal: the creation of a new outdoor clown number between 5 and 10 minutes. We expect you to have a genuine intention to get inspired by the circus past, to participate to all the residencies and try-out(s), keep on working on your number in between the residencies (based on the

suggestions of the coach) and perform the number during Clown College at festival 'de groote stooringe'.

If you would perform the number after the festival, or you would rework it, we would like you to mention De Spil as a co-production in the credits.

Timing

Tuesday 23rd of January – Inspiration day – De Spil Roeselare

Monday 12th – Friday 16th of February – residency 1 – coaches Eva Kahan and Aurelia Brailowsky (creation first material number) – De Spil Roeselare

Tuesday 9th – Saturday 13th of April – residency 2 – coach Mickaël Leguen ('le cascade' or burlesque slapstick) – De Spil Roeselare

Monday 15th – Friday 19th of April – residency 3 – coach Christine Rossignol-Dallaire ('art clownesque') – De Spil Roeselare

Between May – September; possibility for 1 or 2 'rendez-vous'-working sessions of 1 day with Eva and/or Aurelia for each clown number (You can mutually agree on date and location.)

Monday 16th- Friday 20th of September – residency 4 – coaches Eva and Aurelia + Monsieur Loyal (Bram Dobbelaere) (creation show 'Clown College' + group scene) – De Spil Roeselare

Friday 20th of September try-out Roeselare

Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd of September – festival 'de groote stooringe' (performing 2x/day) - Roeselare

Interested?

You can apply as an individual (solo), or as a duo, trio, ... Mail your resume and why you would like to participate to this project (letter of motivation) to gwendolien.sabbe@despil.be before Sunday 17th of December. We'll send you an answer Tuesday 19th of December 2023.

Questions?

Send an e-mail to gwendolien.sabbe@despil.be .

This project is possible thanks to the support of Circusdecreet of the Flemish Government

Who's who?

Research and expert team circus heritage and circus past Clown College:

- *Gwendolien Sabbe, De Spil – circus historian, research, expertise American circus
- *Marie Vandecaveye, Huis Van Alijn (HvA) – circus heritage and Belgian circus collection, curator circus exhibitions (Circus on the road, 2020-2021)
- *Matilde Ruppert (Circuscentrum) - circus heritage
- *André Depoorter – expert and author of many books on the Belgian circus (De geschiedenis van de Belgische circussen, Antwerpse circusartiesten, Brusselse circusartiesten, Gentse circusartiesten, De kapriolen van Bill Kartoum, ...)
- *Jan Inghelbrecht - private collector (archive, photos, postcards, objects, costumes, posters), expert European traditional circus(past), network traditional circus

Aurelia Brailowsky (MX/FR) graduated at the ESAC and toured as a clown-acrobat for years with Hopla Circus. She's now teaching at Codarts Circus Arts (Rotterdam) and Circusplaneet. She directed shows for Codarts and coaches many projects, for instance 'The Amazing Katleen' (Circ Rodini), 'Prologue' (Soif Totale Cie), '99cm' (Iara Gueller).

Eva Kahan (BE) attended Espace Catastrophe and the international school for physical theatre Lassaad in Brussels, worked as cliniclown and taught at the circus school 'Circusplaneet' in Gent.

Mickaël Leguen (FR) graduated at Le Lido (Toulouse), is a clown/acrobat for cie Sacécripa and a much asked 'régard extérieur'/coach (for instance Cie Wurst, Le Cirque Poussière, La Voie Ferrée). Leguen is renowned internationally for his slapstick workshops.

Christine Rossignol-Dallaire (FR) is a renowned clown (Cie Les Aplicateurs, Cie Contre Pour). She directs or coaches regularly circus companies (Cirque Eloize, Bande Artistique, La Vague de Cirque, Okidok, Hopla Circus, ...). Since 2004 she teaches 'l'art clownesque' in Europe, Quebec and Hangar des Mines, a creation space for clowning, that she founded together with her husband Michel Dallaire, also a famous clown.

Aline Breucker (BE) is costume designer and scenographer for opera, dance, theatre, and circus (for instance Hopla Circus, Carré Curieux and her own compagnie, Side-Show). Her fascination for the circus past always influences her creation process.

Bram Dobbelaere (BE) (Mr. Loyal or the presenter of the show Clown College) has years of experience as a performer (juggler), playing with his compagnies Cie Ea Eao and cie Pol & Freddy. He's also a much-wanted coach/director/co-writer (for instance Collectif Malunés, Cie Scratch, Cirque Exalté, Cirque du Bout du Monde)

Did you know that Clown College really existed? Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey decided to found Clown College in 1968 because there was a lack of good clowns. When they closed the doors in 1997 they taught almost 1.400 clowns the 'Ringling style' of clowning.