

bi-

assembly (Montbazou, September 22-27 2020)

(day one)

instead of “not working” I started to prefer to say “reproductive labour” it’s not a holiday feeling of home. Cozy. reproductive labour? as in, cooking, cleaning etc. there’s something bittersweet about it. you’re creating something that you don’t want to leave. it’s a week, and then it’s gone... or not? but it can be repeated. or, you can return to some part of the bi- experience in your ‘regular life’. bi- changed the way how I deal with my working relationships. how open are we to new people? About 50 experienced bi- by now, but 30 people are still on the waiting list. How can we make more residencies and repeat bi- more often? Problem: this implies more work... or not? bi- as a thought that can be transmitted. can we make a script, a format others can use? the open call is an important part of the game. ideally, those who organise or host a bi- residency have participated themselves before. why not make an open call for hosts? other bi- ingredients...

there was no introduction moment where people “presented” themselves and their work. this was refreshing. often later moments do arise when work is shared. That can also happen between two people instead of the full group. this raises questions about the things we make implicit and explicit. Asking questions to each other and sharing work can also be an act of generosity, while for some others not needing to do that is a gift. rhythms of the group; often slow, rhythms form around eating moments. Sometimes it was clear individuals felt the need for a different rhythm or structure. That is possible. what do you explain / state in the beginning? organising is more than organising the groceries. It’s also about ‘checking in’ with each other, have an eye for group dynamics, creating space for all involved. This is happening now already in an informal way, but could be made more explicit with a group check-in.

bi- is domestic,

bi- prefers to find cheap and local food instead of going to a regular supermarket. For this, local knowledge is important. bi- is liminal, off centre (especially distanced from contemporary art centres, whether those are cities or more rural). bi- should always have more than one organiser present and involved. bi- is (explicitly) open for people out of the art field. But emerged from the art field and is aware of that.

The response and the call. 'you're already in it'

The residency doesn't only happen during the actual residency. All communication before and after, the relationships and actions that emerge, are part of bi-. an essential part of bi- is not knowing (not knowing who you will meet, what you end up in, what you will do - or not do - yourself). to commit to the unknown is an active decision. it involves trust. It makes the participants bond (we're all in this together). For this reason it's important that not all people know each other beforehand (then bi- would be different).

strangers and friends that get together for no reason.

the place has plenty of space for cooking (a big kitchen) the pleasure of finding cheap local food

organising bi- (with all its unknowns) involves emotional labour.

the language issue. Yes we translate. (the act of translating shows that bi- is open to multiple languages). Knowing the language of the participants is maybe one of the few things we need to know beforehand, or could give more attention to - to make everyone feel as welcome as possible.

another medium is also a form of translation; a story on Instagram, a poster on the street, a town crier. former participants can spread the word (a street team).

a lack of time and resources makes that bi- cannot do everything it would ideally do; so choices are made, that are subjective.

can bi- organisers still also be bi- participants?

apply for funding: what if we apply not for funding to host a residency but to invest in some tools that makes it easier to organise bi- and take care of the 'overhead' (website, time to reflect, time to make open calls etc.).

"crowdfunding" can also happen in a non-monetary way. 50 people have participated in bi-, there is a network of people who could help.

how can we move from feeling the burden of work into feeling the joy of it (again).

(day two)

how fast did institutions try to incorporate us? It only took two years.

we agree to disagree, but are there limits to that? Where are those?

a case study: de appel commission (low fee, lots of discussion, reflecting on bi- but not doing bi-. Wanting to respond with an alternative way but that stayed a joke instead of discussing it as a serious option. Relating to curatorial practice. We were suddenly getting more realistic when relating to institutions. asked for a higher fee but didn't get it. Ended up in a talk being the most marginal compared to other participants).

what happens if we start to value ourselves, could we try to not think in putting a price on our 'outcomes'? can bi- sustain contradictory opinions about bi- (yes we can. We don't want to be that precise)

bi- can be in relation with individual artistic practices (and you can act from that standpoint).

money is the elephant in the room.

commissions are not "really" a source of income (fees are too small for that) do you see bi- as your main occupation in the future?

No.

indebtedness. bi- started from a desire to escape that. pricing the amount of money we would need to keep things going would put us in the position of being indebted. are there other roads than either applying for money to keep things running, or slowing down? it looks like you are still recovering from 2019.

burn out.

it's also possible to expand in a different way: by letting others organise something similar as bi-, in their own way, but with an acknowledgement / shoutout / mentioning of bi-.

(day three)

commitment to the unknown. (that is Enrico's horoscope). Let there be room for not knowing today. notes from Ewa; it's like a spiral that still went up. Who can afford volunteering?

looking for the "impossible" - unrealistic expectations.

how to change the system without entering it? And playing its rules.

let yourself lose the control a bit. not because you're control freaks but because you try to put a lot of attention to everything. about losing control; how can we share the tools we use, and document this, more of an open access, so not one person is responsible.

there is this telegram chat. wait, we have an outcome here.

We accept the invitation that you forgot to send us (and the budget looks ok).