

ID Frankfurt

Independent Dance

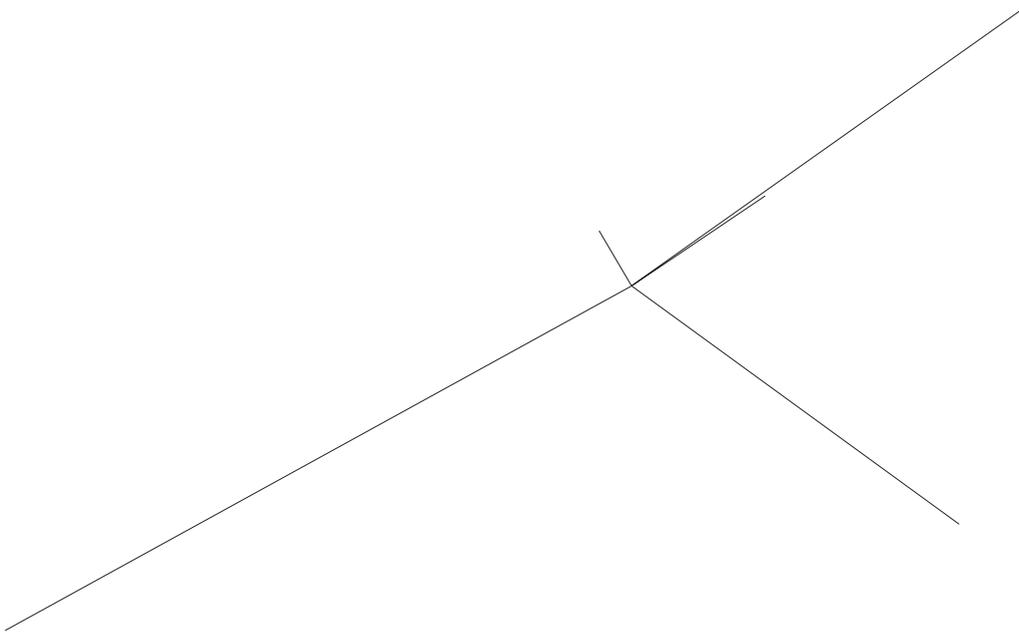


NETWORKERS' MEETING

Report and perspectives

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INTRODUCTION

Self-Organization in the Contemporary Performing Art within a European Perspective

Out of artistic and cultural-political motives and through economic necessity modes of production in the field of contemporary performing arts have changed. Throughout the past years, artists thinking ahead have started developing networking organizations across Europe for supporting and disseminating artistic works in a thoughtful way. They hold a valuable body of knowledge, have engaged audiences, invested spaces and fostered strong communities across disciplines.

In "Networkers' Meetings" participants from Frankfurt, Köln, Berlin, Lisbon, Sofia, Riga are searching for new ways of collaborating; that strengthen each local context and both generate usefully linked infrastructures as well as a "united intimacy". The first steps shaping the form of our network are to display the individual networkers' histories and organizational structures; furthermore, to inform ourselves about the complex funding possibilities for networking within European culture policies but also through alternative programs - to put the network into practice by developing collaboration projects of various scales and forms for 2012 and 2013.

This blog is to present the evolving forms of the network and share the gathered knowledge with everyone interested. Through an extended and qualified link library of informational and discursive websites on networking in European performing arts sector. Also, each Networkers' Meeting will be documented in an outline of the questions, statements, practical ideas and fantastic visions we come up with - every time representing a new state of the network.

I will therefore propose a working definition of the networked-institution as a synchronic institution of cartographies that evolves situation by situation, changes according to variable geometries and produces common concepts, at the same time in which the intense levels of participation and convergent time scales and perspectives shared by social movements, different from one another but nevertheless "composable", begin to emerge. (...)

(...) the repertoire of actions which movements draw upon to construct horizontal forms of institutional practices, in other words practices that formulate sophisticated programmatic frameworks for articulating a common process of self-organisation.

Francesco Salvini

["The moons of Jupiter: Networked institutions in the productive transformations of Europe" 2008](#)

(Together) We will love the beach
(Together) We will learn and teach
(Together) Change our pace of life
(Together) We will work and strive
(Pet Shop Boys: "Go West")

FIRST MEETING

November 26th and 27th 2011
at Platform Sarai, Frankfurt

Concept

It is on the basis of first exchanges that have taken place between the organizations 36 monkeys (Sofia), AADK (Berlin, Lisbon), Michael Douglas Kollektiv (Köln), Gertrüdes ielas teātris (Riga) and ID_Frankfurt (Frankfurt a.M.) that we would like to deepen our understanding of self-organization in performing arts (motivations, implications, dangers). Networking means here the configuration of local infrastructures between free-lance and institutional context, as well as synchronizing working interests between a group of networks from different sectors and nations. All invited networkers live already a European working life of cross-national collaboration projects and collectives with various nationalities; still they have each a very specific European position. In the frame of the third edition of the Tanzpanorama Festival in Frankfurt a.M. the networkers will present their individual management strategies between the great ideas and precarious daily routine. The aim of 'Networkers' Meeting' is to generate sustainable development plans and lists of practical tools for creating infrastructures, but also to have time for idealistic discussions about our goals and visions.

Preparing Questions A: *Introduction to your profile as an organization/association/venue*

- What are your general goals and motives?
- What is your form as an organization? Can you describe it in terms of a functional structure, makers and users?
- What are your network relations – within the art sector, with public medias, cultural politics, local economy, etc.?
- What resources (f.ex. spaces) do you have? Which you would like to have?
- How do you regulate your accessibility and selection processes?
- How do you gain visibility in your local and maybe European context?
- How do you survive economically?
- Are you inspired by any existing self-organizations?

Preparing Questions B: *Could you formulate personal statements concerning the following subjects:*

"Networking" and "Collaboration" seem to be key notions in European performing arts today. Free-lance artists organize themselves in working associations, networks and platforms – to facilitate communication, create synergies across borders of professional sectors, nationalities, art genres and to establish new diversified infrastructures [\(1\)](#). Possible positive and negative implications are:

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- Individual ways of producing and disseminating art as an act of self-empowering.
- Widening your artistic and working perspectives to European and even international level.
- Alternatives to the limited presenting possibilities within the systems of National theater and accordingly institutionalized venues and festivals of the non-public sector.
- Solidarity and multiplied forces in a cultural community.
- ... ?

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- To share an organizational form but not to share an artistic and/or political vision.
- Exhaustion due to the constant fusing of private and working life.
- Difficulties of free-lance mobility on European level, regarding f.ex. non-unified and complex regulations of taxation and social security [\(2\)](#).
- As an artist you are only as visible as your collaborative associations; or as the Slovenian theoretician Bojana Kunst puts it: "We can say that collaboration, communication and connection belong to the most fetishized fields of the present day:"[\(3\)](#).
- ... ?

Resuming Questions / Statements

- An initiative / infrastructure / institution can be a natural development of what you are doing anyway - use what is already there.
Dilemma of precariousness: don't postpone your life with waiting for acceptable working conditions.

- How to activate passive members? How to feel solidarity as a sector or scene?
How to overlap aesthetic 'gaps'?
Sharing a space make encounters possible.
- Dilemma of funding imperatives: being mobile, networking, communicating...
overflow of immaterial work - insisting on materiality instead.
- To construct our own network architecture of sharing resources and
infrastructures ("black board"), because of more efficiency, more presenting
possibilities, better funding position and, last but not least, social possibilities,
shared interests and knowledge.
F.ex. creating an alternative thoughtful residency program (instead of the come-
show-and go).
Putting the network into practice by smaller projects (f.e.x mobilities and
educational, vocational programs like Leonardo da Vinci or Grundtvig)
Using, practicing the network is the form AND the content of the network.
- Not everyone has to agree on everything.
- Gain your position within the crumbling institutions in our times of crises.
- Find descriptive vocabulary for structural forms of network organizations - not
only on meta-level.
- Networkers' Meetings can have many forms: maybe a site-specific meeting, a
walk in the countryside, or a gift chain. Or:
 - 1) Short time travel & visiting projects; also for artists and not only for producers
and programmers.
 - 2) Collaboration projects on European level (festival, residency program, guest-
performances)

Networkers

Norbert Pape, Nina Vallon, Kristina Veidt (ID_Frankfurt), Gregana Dimitrova (36
monkeys), Michael Maurissens, Douglas Bateman (MichaelDouglas Kollektiv), Vania
Rovisco (AADK), Maija Pavlova (Ģertrūdes ielas teātris)

Participants from local contexts:

Phillip Schulte, Stefan Hölscher, Florian Ackermann (ATW & CuP Justus-Liebig
University of Gießen, Hessische Theaterakademie, Initiative Haus für Probe und
Forschung), Mareike Uhl (Tanzlabor_21), Stefanie Knobel (Studentin CuP), Wiebke
Dröge (dance educator), Caroline Spellenberg (free-lance dramaturge, documentarist)

Hosts

Norbert Pape, Nina Vallon and Kristina Veit (producers, organizers and hosts),
freelance choreographers, dancers, performers, producers, curators and initiators of

ID_Frankfurt / Independent Dance and Tanzpanorma.

Caroline Spellenberg (documentation & presentation) graduated student of the Institute of Applied Theatre Studies and free-lance dramaturge and producer.

Stefan Hoelscher, assistant professor of MA Choreographie und Performance Gießen, and *Philipp Schulte*, dramaturge and personal assistant of Heiner Goebbels, (moderation).



ABOUT THE NETWORKERS and THE NETWORKS

- **36 monkeys** is an organization for contemporary alternative art and culture based in Sofia, Bulgaria.
- AADK / Aktuelle Architektur der Kultur is an international artistic network based in Berlin since 2008, branching out in Spain and Portugal.
- **Ģertrūdes ielas teātris** is a theatre venue in Riga since 2009 and a central part of the becoming independent art scene in the Baltic States.
- **ID_Frankfurt/ Independent Dance** is an association of more than 50 free-lancer artists in the field of choreography and dance in Frankfurt a.M.
- **MichaelDouglas Kollektiv**, founded in 2009 by former 'pretty ugly tanz köln' dancers and choreographers Michael Maurissens and Douglas Bateman.

Networkers_36 Monkeys

36 Monkeys is an organization for contemporary alternative art and culture based in Sofia, Bulgaria. It provides a blog about the local art scene and organises events, like the festival ProText.

36 Monkeys is a non-governmental organization established to launch and implement innovative projects in the field of culture and art and focused exclusively on experimenting and promotion of alternative and unpopular art forms. Its long-term strategy is justified by the idea to extend and diversify the non-institutionalized and informal environment. (from: [\[Sofia\] weblog](#))

Basic programm of ProText are onstage readings of new European drama in non-theatrical spaces. The idea behind these reading performances is to set up a homogeneous art milieu in which architectural space, texts, actor's presence, live music act and multimedia are blended into a single body that binds its individual elements into a coherent union. There have been already a German, a French, a Romanian and Bulgarian edition and various non-theatre spaces – such as a fitness studio, university department, basement, or a bar – were temporarily occupied. see [Video on Romanian edition of ProText 2010](#)

Another important project is the translation of standard works of contemporary theatre discourses, like Hans-Thies Lehmann's *Postdramatic Theatre* – that is important because writers as well as audiences need to find specific vocabulary for new forms of theatre.

Gergana Dimitrova/ 36 Monkeys:

Art must be independent.

Text can be everything(also theatre). Theatre can be everywhere.

The independent theatre sector in Bulgaria is sharing: no spaces, no funding, no visibility, no reflection.

But we are rehearsing at home. Or at the home of somebody else.

36monkeys.blogspot.com

Networkers_AADK

AADK / Aktuelle Architektur der Kunst is an international artistic network based in Berlin since 2008, branching out in Spain and Portugal. Its members have various artistic aesthetics and the network is constantly redefining itself.

AADK's anti-systematic vision, in constant adjustment and formation, is permeable to the outside of its various centers, and privileges an intuitive and critical approach to the fields it decides to visit, occupy, utilize, dissect, transform or fracture.

The art making is peculiar to each individual artist, but presentation settings and strategies of fruition hold a discursive and social interest, therefore members and guest artists come together in creating live events.

(from [AADK Homepage](#))

Vania Rovisco/AADK

To share and participate, as part of a community. Why there is still the dominance of big institutions [in the field of arts] while the decentralisation process since the 1990s is meeting the 'no space situation' today?

To be in a very fast dynamic – for creation processes theatre institutions are too slow.

AADK is itself an artistic project -to play with the rules.

To make the curating system obsolete and create your own circulation system – f.ex. an artistic couch surfing.

To engage in a programm of opposites to the guest-performance chain of airport-stage-airport: engage people from the local scene and perform in different places also outside of the theatres.

When you have no money, take the chance to strip the body of the project down to it's very core.

www.aadk.org

Networkers_Ģertrūdes ielas teātris

Ģertrūdes ielas teātris is a theatre venue in Riga and a central part of the becoming independent art scene in the Baltic States. It offers space for performances, concerts, movie showings as well as various workshops, meetings and festivities.

The name comes from the street (Gertrude's street) in which the theatre is based on the 2nd and 3rd floor of a former furniture factory. The GIT is an open stage established in 2009 by [United Intimacy](#), together at this time with the support of creative association [Nomadi](#) and [New Theatre Institute of Latvia](#). It is a place for the audience to see contemporary dance and theatre performances created by independent artist and companies from Latvia and abroad.

The team today still originates mostly from the independent theatre group United Intimacy that was established in order to activate the theatre processes of Riga; striving to create a dynamic, contemporary and provocative alternative to the state theatre programs. For them it is important that performances resonate with today's reality of Riga and Latvia, forming an active and open dialogue with their audience.

The repertoire principles of United Intimacy reflect two main aspects—being personal and being relevant. It is not about making politics of the repertoire, but rather the politics of individual events.

That in 2009 United Intimacy rented the two floors (together around 250qm) to become the Ģertrūdes ielas teātris has also the reason in the difficult space situation of the independent theatre sector in Riga: it was cheaper to rent the space for one month than to rent the stage of the National Theatre for one night. So, they faced the problems of making a theatre venue in an empty space: financial resources (only the ticket income), technical resources, contacts with local artists and public.

Today the GIT hosts 8-15 projects per month, from own theatre productions to non-art events like seminars or tango lessons. The inherent aim is to give space for making art and to give space for socialising.

Maija Pavlova / Ģertrūdes ielas teātris:

Our values are: daring, topicality, sensitiveness, search of new ways in creativity, courage, openness, professionally, thought-out purposefulness.

Positive implications of networking policy are that people are forced to move, to communicate, to open their horizons that can lead to really fruitful outcome. However quite often artists and producers are so busy with doing networking that their core business – doing the art- is lost. One cannot get support for creative work, one can only be supported in order to create new communication channel. Another thing is that

networking and collaboration become buzzwords that have lost their initial meaning – it has become form of doing things and has lost the content – why to network, why to collaborate – what additional benefits except the financial ones are there for all – artists, managers, audience?

Is there a place for united intimacy?

www.git.lv

Networkers_ID Frankfurt

ID_Frankfurt / Independent Dance is an association of more than 50 free-lancer artists in the field of choreography and dance in Frankfurt a.M. with the aim to strengthen the local scene. One project is the annual festival **Tanzpanorama** that constituted the initial frame for the 1st Networkers' Meeting.

ID_Frankfurt / Independent Dance was founded with the aim of enhancing the working conditions of, creating an infrastructure for and fostering exchange amongst free-lance artists in the field of dance and performance. Also, with the aim to raise awareness amongst politicians of the emergence of a very strong free-lance scene on a regional level.

ID_Frankfurt continues to redefine itself and its initiatives within the ever-changing cultural landscape of Frankfurt, to best support the needs of artists who seek to research, create and determine their own conditions of work.

ID_Frankfurt is now exploring possibilities of exchange with other networks and partners, nationally and internationally.

The initiative originates from the difficulties of the local scene in Frankfurt a.M.: being a highly stimulating educational sector of performing & fine art with schools and a variety of profiled workshops; though, with almost none infrastructures for free-lance professionals to produce and present their work.

Another motivation was to create a non-competitive environment – with an anti-Darwin principle of 'survival of the fittest' – for artists to be together.

The character of ID_Frankfurt underwent already fundamental changes during its 3 1/2 years of existence: from the funding of the first Tanzpanorama Festival in 2009 with almost union-like beginnings and the aim to represent and give visibility to the free-lance sector in general, through many collective discussions, today ID_Frankfurt stands more and more for a vision, an aesthetic context, a position.

So, the 3rd edition of Tanzpanorama Festival in 2011 had the idea to reduce the output, meaning material and logistic efforts, and make „rough cuts“. In other words, not trying to reproduce a certain look of a highly professional festival, but to respect

more the efforts of organizers and participants, focus on perspective, reflection, on meeting and communication.

Norbert Pape, Nina Vallon, Kristina Veidt/ ID_Frankfurt:

It seems to be easier to get funding for networking / mobility / collaboration processes than for the artistic work itself.

How to balance investment into institutions, organisation and into artists?

The organizational context and working processes (the form) automatically become also the meaningful content.

But there is the danger that sharing an organizational structure doesn't necessarily imply sharing the same vision.

www.idfrankfurt.com

Networkers_Michael Douglas Kollektiv

MDKollektiv was founded in 2009 by former 'pretty ugly tanz köln' dancers and choreographers Michael Maurissens and Douglas Bateman. When the dance company was closed down by the city they decided to go on – today the MD Kollektiv is a constellation of dancers and choreographers who bring various professional and international experiences to Köln. They work on providing infrastructures as a centralised local network as well as a larger, international collaboration network. Trying to organize small more research based projects as well as dance productions on a bigger scale.

So, the main goal is not to push out own choreographic work but to offer research and networking space for the local free-lance dance scene. A choreographer's research program (1 week of work + public showing) is an example of how MD Kollektiv is reacting to the needs of free-lancers for space, attention and presentation frames.

The particularities of the context for dance in Köln are: very urban city, early history of contemporary dance and a strong basis of young choreographers – it lies in their responsibility to face and challenge the situation of today.

Another important aspect for the MD Kollektiv are their good relations with established institutions, like the city theatre that offers them f.ex. rehearsal possibilities.

Michael Maurissens, Douglas Bateman / MD Kollektiv

Our aims are mainly infrastructural interests and that implies a lot of communication ('Vermittlung') of the genre of the organization we are.

It is the question of representation of a collective or network organization – people need one face, to shake hands with, to sign contracts, etc.

*How can you create a structure that implies already a way to make decisions?
How to regulate accessibility, decide about quality, not monopolising on aesthetics or
working processes – and at the same time be effective and quick?*

www.mdkollektiv.de



RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

- [APAP_ \(Advancing Performing Arts Project\)](#) has produced over 100 artistic programs and has created a European network to exchange artists and artistic projects, cultural workers and know-how in the last 10 years.
- [CCP-Deutschland](#) is the German Contact Point for information about EU culture fundings. To provide advice & technical assistance to cultural actors interested in applying to the European Commission.
- [EIPCP \(European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies\)](#) for networking practices & developing discourses on the arts and instruments of cultural policies. Multi-lingual webjournals like Republicart, Transform, Transversal with issues like „Alternative Economics“, „Artists as Producers“, etc.
- [EMCRA](#) German business for training & consulting in EU funding and EU non-profit projects.
- [ENICPA _ \(European Network of Information Centers for the Performing Arts\)](#) aims to function as a meeting place for information and documentation; to find information about European festivals, venues, publications, training opportunities etc.
- [eurocult / European Cultural Foundation](#) is an independent non-profit organization that promotes cultural cooperation in Europe. Offers activities, programmes, grants and online-platforms; especially interesting are the collaboration grants.
- [IETM_](#) international network for contemporary performing arts. It is a membership organization to initiate and facilitate professional networking and communication.
- [Interarts](#) is an international agency that provides advice in cultural policy, contributes to development processes through culture and facilitates knowledge and information transfer in the field of culture.
- [La Belle Ouvrage_](#) is for rethinking, analysing, questioning and changing your relation to your work. Through professional formation, individual and group mentoring, production and circulation of ideas.
- [LabforCulture_](#) networking platform for information on European arts; especially interesting are the schemes of funding and lists of alternative sources of funding.
- [NA BIBB_ Nationale Agentur Bildung für Europa beim Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung](#) , helpful advices on what EU program fits your project; also personal consultation on writing your application.
- [On the Move_](#) cultural mobility information network to encourage and facilitate cross-border mobility and cooperation. Outstanding mobility projects, like PEARLE*, PRACTICS, etc.
- [Pearle* _ \(Performing Arts Employers Association\)](#) is the European trade federation of Performing Arts organisations. Especially interesting are the position papers and publications.

- [PRACTICS_](#) 3-year pilot project which aims to facilitate the provision of information about crossborder mobility in the cultural sector across Europe. Very useful list of documents and links on the subject.
- [SPACE_ \(Supporting Performing Arts Circulation in Europe\)](#) pilot project for artist mobility (2008 – 2011). The members share a position between politics and the artistic field and work as centres of information about the situation in their own countries.
- [TkH-Platform / TkH-Generator](#) operates since 2002 as an independent organization based in Belgrad: TkH-center for performing arts theory and practice in local and international context..
- [Travelogue_ \(part of SPACE\)](#) undertakes an experimental research in linking and sharing data on international performing arts touring that are collected by institutions all over Europe. f.ex. report “Mapping Performing Arts Mobility in Europe”.
- [Vlaams Theaters Instituut _](#) Critical interface between theatre-makers, the public and the policy-maker. Detailed master plans about performative arts sector in Flanders and Brussel (“Metamorphoses”, “Canaries in the Coal Mine”) that give outlooks onto the possibilities of the future.

RECOMMENDED PDFS

- [Canaries in the Coal-Mine. Masterplan for Dance in Flanders and Brussels](#)
- [European Cultural Networks and Networking in Central and Eastern Europe](#)
- [Final Recommendations of Mobility Pilots for the new EU Culture Programme \(2014 – 2020\)](#)
- [Guide to Funding Opportunities for the International Mobility of Artists and Culture Professionals in Europe](#)
- [Metamorphoses. Performing Arts in Flanders Since 1993](#)
- [Mobile Home. Study on Impediments to Mobility in the EU Live Performance Sector and on Possible Solutions](#)
- [Travelogue – Mapping Performing Arts Mobility in Europe](#)

ABOUT APPLICATION WITH COLLABORATION PROJECTS FOR EU CULTURE AND EDUCATIONAL, VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Regina Völk gave the participants of the Networkers' Meeting an afternoon-long insight into the work of **EMCRA**: that is consulting projects about applications for EU Culture and Educational, Vocational programs.

Some general tips & information are:

- **Deadlines:** September for Culture programs & February for Educational programs. Both need around 6-8 month of preparation before the 'action' (EU language for project).
- in most cases applicants need the legal status of an association; but not for the "Workshops" of the Grundtvig program f.ex.
- Prove your professionalism to guarantee realisation of the action: best is to have employment (payment) in your organisation; otherwise: show that you have a 'strong structure', an architecture of associated partners, your capacity of handling cash flow and that you have already realised projects.
- Better to start with smaller projects, around 20.000,- budget; as the **EU Culture program** is very bureaucratic and more for bigger projects – go for Educational, Vocational programs like **Lifelong Learning** with **Leonardo da Vinci** (program) "**Partnerships**" (action), or **Grundtvig** (program) "**Workshop**" (action); another useful program could be the **Youth in Action** –all these programs are for meeting, exchange and visiting projects; thereby, the actions listed can of course form the basis of an artistic collaboration.

Here it is the 2 year-long "Partnerships" action which offers the widest choice of formats for the collaboration: it requires at least 3 partners that each then can apply for 4, 8, 12 or 16 'mobilities' over the time period of 2 years. The aim here would be to solidify the collaboration of the participating partners (which does not exclude by any means artistic activities). It requires an action plan distributed over the two years and all partners need a legal status.

- "Mobilities" fund travel costs in a flatrate system according to countries. Here, two partners apply to be recognized by the national agencies as "senders" and "receivers" of participants, with an estimated number of participants per year. These organisations will then be listed through the national agencies, and individuals belonging to the appropriate vocational sector can apply for mobilities. [Here you find a guide](#) on how to apply for a mobility project (PDF, German language).

- Get help with your project applications: **CCP** (National Contact Point for Information about EU Culture Fundings), **NA BIB** (National Agency Education for Europe), or EMCRA (see above)
Recommended (German language only): NA BIB about **Leonardo da Vinci Program / Mobilities / Grundtvig**
- Non-EU comission alternative fundings are f.ex. **ECF/ European Culture Foundation** with **Step Beyond (travel grants)** and **Collaboration grants**(application deadline 20.Feburary-1.May 2012).
More foundations and other alternative fundings are listet on the webiste **LabforCulture**.

EMCRA



- Bojana Kunst „Prognosis on Collaboration“
- Florian Schneider „Collaboration: The Dark Side of the Multitude“
- Francesco Salvini, „The moons of Jupiter: Networked institutions in the productive transformations of Europe“
- Franco Berardi (Bifo) „Info-Labour and Precarisation“
- Gerald Raunig et al. (eds) „Critique of Creativity. Precarity, Subjectivity and Resistance in the ‘Creative Industries’“
- Lectures: Kritik der Insitution. Ringvorlesung der HTA
- Maska is a nonprofit organization for publishing, production (performances, interdisciplinary and visual art works), education and research.
- Surviving Dance. Kunst Wirtschaft Politik



NETWORKERS' MEETING

About the Why and How of
Self-Organization in the Contemporary Performing Arts

A PROJECT FROM

ID Frankfurt Independent Dance

AND SUPPORTED BY



platform sarai