

On&For Production – The Pilot Edition **- By María Palacios Cruz -**

María Palacios Cruz has recently been appointed Deputy Director at LUX. She combines this activity with being a lecturer and curator of avant-garde cinema and artists' film and video. Between 2010 and 2012 she was the director of *Courtisane*, an annual festival in Ghent, Belgium, where she continues to be involved as an associate programmer. She has curated screenings, events and exhibitions for festivals and institutions including Cinematek (Royal Belgian Film Archive), Impakt Utrecht, Wiels Brussels, MuHKA Antwerp, Argos Brussels, Naples Independent Film Show, Videoex Zurich, Animate Projects, Instituto Cervantes and Paris Centre Pompidou. From 2007 to 2011 she was the production coordinator of Atelier Graphoui in Brussels and she worked previously as distribution manager at Argos, centre for art & media. She teaches at Kingston University and Central Saint Martins in London, and she is currently completing a PhD at Université Libre de Bruxelles on the relationship between film theory and avant-garde cinema.

On Friday 25th and Saturday 26th April 2014, the pilot edition of “On&For Production” took place at the headquarters of the Flanders Audiovisual Fund (VAF) in Brussels. This new initiative launched by Auguste Orts – in collaboration with LUX, Contour and Art Brussels¹ - is intended to facilitate the production of artists' moving image by bringing together artists, producers, curators, institutions and collectors.

At the core of the “On&For” project are the **work sessions** in which the four selected artists and their producers (Sven Augustijnen with Auguste Orts; Beatrice Gibson with LUX; Romana Schmalisch & Robert Schlicht with the Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers and Spectre; An van Dienderen with Contour) are able to discuss their projects with 5-6 other especially invited professionals. Two additional events were organized which, unlike the work sessions, were open to the public: the **Open Workshop** with all the participant artists and producers at VAF and the **roundtable** “Acquiring Film and Video: What/How do we own?” at Art Brussels.

It is important to highlight the fact that the organisers behind this initiative refer to it as a “pilot” and not as the first edition. Indeed, the intention was not to launch a yearly pitching forum that would provide an alternative to existing initiatives such as FIDLab or Art:Film, but to explore a different configuration and to learn, together, from the experience. Which is not to say that there will not be more editions of “On&For”, but if there are, the format will probably be further defined in response to this pilot and the feedback received from its participants.

Context

Over the past two decades, artists working with the moving image have bridged a historical gap between the film industry and the art world. This has manifested in many ways: from the ubiquitous presence of film and video in the gallery space, to the work of visual artists such as Steve McQueen, Miranda July, Pierre Bismuth, Sam Taylor-Johnson or Ben Rivers being shown in the multiplex. As someone put it during the open workshop, every artist wants to be a filmmaker, and every filmmaker is an artist.

These interactions have inevitably brought to the forefront the differences between the two worlds. As a consequence, artists working with film and video have often found themselves having to negotiate what in many ways is a shock of cultures. Unlike the film industry, there are no models or set procedures for the production of films and videos in the visual arts. There are as many ways of doing as there are artists. As many approaches to production as there are producers. This was reflected by “On&For”. Not only did the four projects present distinctly

¹ And with the support of VAF, BAM, Argos and Media Desk Vlaanderen.

disparate approaches to the relationship between artist and producer, but also when preparing together for the Open Workshop, the necessity to define “production” quickly emerged in the discussion. In the film industry there is no such necessity, only an implicit agreement around the terminology and methodology used.

When asked to define “production”, the answers of the “On&For” participants ranged from the practical, logistical and financial (“*getting a project financed, getting a production structure together and realising it.*” Sven Augustijnen) to the relationship between author, subject and audience (“*Production is for me first and foremost a relational performance between myself and the “other”, in which a viewer is prefigured.*” An van. Dienderen). For Beatrice Gibson, who is interested in the ongoing tension between process and product, “*the seemingly logistical, the process behind a film, becomes as much a part of the art work as the film itself.*” Romana Schmalisch and Robert Schlicht highlighted the collaborative nature of the production process: “*Production for us would ideally be a collaborative process of closely working with the producer and coproducers to discuss questions relevant to the film as well as to develop possibilities of its realisation.*”

Significantly, those last two were the two projects in which there was a stronger sense of the producer being part of the creative dialogue, as an interlocutor or as Mike Sperlinger (Gibson’s producer) put it, “*an enlightened curator*”. Olivier Marboeuf (the producer of Schmalisch and Schlicht’s project) spoke of his position as “*a reluctant producer*” as if agreeing to use a term while acknowledging its limitations. The two other projects were on the other hand – willingly or not – representative of a more traditional, or film-like, repartition of roles between artist (creative) and producer (financial, logistical, etc).

The “On&For” experience raised – among many others – the question of *how* to produce artists’ films. By gathering around a table a number of potential partners in the realisation of a moving image project, it proposed a paradigm of dialogue and collaboration that advocated for an understanding of production as intrinsically involved in the creative process.

The fact that the “On&For” artists all had a production structure behind them is in itself exceptional, and yet representative of the general evolution of the field from the solitary, self-produced position of the avant-garde filmmaker in the past to the collaborative nature of moving image art practice today. In Belgium, together with Auguste Orts, there are a handful of artists-run or artists-led production platforms: Jubilee, Michigan Films, Zéro de Conduite, Polymorfils, Escautville, just to name a few. Although most Belgian artists still function in a self-production mode (via their own production structures such as An van. Dienderen’s Elektrischer Schnellseher), many seem to be gravitating towards collective platforms. Jubilee, Escautville and Zéro de Conduite have appeared in the past two years, and their creation highlights this new necessity for artists to join efforts and develop organizational structures to support their endeavours in production and distribution. Beyond creating the right operational framework, one could argue that the main draw for artists is to develop the possibilities of collaborative practice and to escape their previous creative solitude.

Ranging from modest self-financed to six-figure budgets, the production strategies that artists need to put into place are mixed (a combination of support from film funds, art institutions, private investment, sponsorship, collectors), are specific to each project and need to be constantly reassessed. As the “On&For” mission statement reads “*the development, production and distribution of artists’ films are collaborative, performative and hybrid. Collaborative because artist films bring together different partners; performative because the production strategies that are put into place are not based on a pattern but rather permanently redefined according to the specific needs of each project; hybrid because they exist across the regimes of art and cinema.*”

Hovering between the regimes of art and cinema, artists have been the object of much confusion and prejudice. Both sides are guilty of mythicising the other. Artists want to access the large budgets of feature filmmakers. Film producers want to get to the art money by selling editions.

Coincidentally, or not, this is what one film producer in the audience of the roundtable at Art Brussels was hinting to in his questions to the panelists. The prestige and cultural credibility of the arts also represents a lure for the film industry.

Similar initiatives

In response to all this, a series of initiatives have emerged in the past 5 years that have tried to bring down the art/film divide by including moving image artists in the professional markets and pitching sessions that are traditional to the film industry.

In 2009 FID Marseille launched FIDLab, which is described as a coproduction platform, the main purpose being to put artists in touch with producers and or co-producers. Auguste Orts took part in the first edition with Sofie Benoot's *Blue Meridian*.

Like "On&For", FIDLab takes place over two days. 10-12 projects are selected, at any stage of their production and regardless of format, length, subject matter or genre (fiction is equally accepted even if FID is traditionally a documentary film festival). On the first day, the artists and their producers present the projects to a professional audience that also includes the artists and producers of the other projects. The second day, there is time for one-to-one meetings which have been organised by the FIDLab team and which last around 15-20 minutes each. This means that most of the professional attendees meet most of the artists that are pitching projects. Over the years, FIDLab has succeeded in attracting projects by artists such as Gabriel Abrantes, Carlos Casas, Vincent Meessen, Ben Rivers & Ben Russell, Jeanne Balibar, Nicolas Pereda, Valerie Massadian, Neil Beloufa and Marie Losier. In 2013, 320 proposals were submitted. Drawing suitable professionals to the meetings is a challenge every year, but is key in ensuring that the experience can be productive to the participants. Participation itself can be rewarding – not only because of the encounters with fellow artists and producers and the possibility to exercise their pitch, but also because a jury grants the FIDLab award. This prize was won by Sofie Benoot in 2009.

More than 50 projects have been presented since its inception, more than half of which have been completed and exhibited. Many of these have met their co-producers at FID.

Art:Film, which takes place at CPH:DOX and International Film Festival Rotterdam², was initiated in 2011 and functions as an international platform gathered around a common mission to facilitate meetings between artists, filmmakers, galleries, art institutions, producers, foundations and other professionals working with art and/or film. It is organised by Jacobine van der Vloed (formerly of CineMart, IFFR) and freelance producer Tobias Pausinger. Its goal is the transfer of knowledge. At each of its manifestations, Art:Film has taken different forms: think tank, seminar, roundtable and pitching forum.

In its first incarnation at CPH:DOX 2011, the focus was on the production of feature length work by artists. During a two-day symposium, questions around the production, financing and distribution of art cinema were debated. A few months later, a panel at IFFR with Stuart Comer, Simon Field, Nicolas Provost, Wilhelm Sasnal, Tine Fischer, Meghan Tomeo, Mike Goodridge and Bartomeu Mari followed up on the Copenhagen discussions by examining the turn towards narrative in artists' film.

The creation of Art:Film generated a very enthusiastic response. It was exciting that producers and curators were finally being brought together and that film's status in the art world, and the position of artists in the film industry, was being acknowledged by renowned film festival such as Rotterdam and CPH:DOX. Over the years, it has become necessary to go beyond discussing the dichotomy between black box and white cube and to achieve more concrete results. This is partly

² In 2013 an Art:Film panel was also organised in the context of Frieze London.

why Art:Film has since become part of CineMart and has transformed into a pitching forum for visual artists. In January 2014, Auguste Orts participated with *Fierté Nationale* by Sven Augustijnen, the same project that was presented during "On&For". The other two participants were Mark Lewis and Michelangelo Frammartino. Unlike FIDLab, there isn't an open call for projects at Art:Film and the selection is done through scouting and networking. Pausinger and van der Vloed also look into suitable projects submitted through the regular entry procedure of CineMart. Each year one project from CPH:forum is selected to be presented in Rotterdam as well, and vice versa. The approach at Art:Film is to help and accompany artists as they enter the logic of cinema markets, but unlike "On&For", it does not propose an altogether different logic.

"On&For" builds on those experiences as well as on ongoing discussions with other professionals in the field – such as Ben Cook, from LUX who is a partner in Art:Film and has participated in many of these panels – in an attempt to transplant some of the procedures from the film industry to the moving image art sector. "On&For" is more hands-on, prioritising a conversational format and working more long-term with the participants.

Conceiving "On & For"

As Ben Cook explained during the Open Workshop, something that Art:Film had highlighted during its last pitching session in Rotterdam was the inadequacy for artists to conform to the pitch as it was understood and expected by their film industry audience. When a filmmaker talks about a new project, it doesn't matter, ultimately, what that person has done before. By contrast, an artist is more likely to present previous work, how it has been shown, the ideas that have informed it. In other words, an artist doesn't pitch an assembled project but him or herself and doesn't necessarily talk about what will be seen on screen in the film-to-be but rather about the configuration of concepts that underline it.

In Rotterdam, the artists had to discuss their work in front of an audience, and then proceed to speed-dating type meetings with industry guests who most likely didn't know their work at all.

"On&For" proposed a more intimate and informal situation, half way between a studio visit, a project presentation and a work meeting. Instead of an auditorium, a small group sat together around a table. In lieu of speed dating, nearly two hours of collective discussion. The artists not only knew whom they were addressing, but had been involved in inviting them. The guests were there to only meet one artist, which meant that they could focus their attention. Having accepted the invitation was in itself a form of commitment and a confirmation of strong interest in the project. The artists only had to present their projects once, and not repeat themselves every 20 minutes.

The artists were not asked to conform the presentations of their projects to the film industry's model. The only requirement was that they should present the project's concept as well as the production calendar and financial strategy. The hope was that the staging of the situation would generate a working environment in which concrete results could be achieved and project-based collaboration triggered.

Although Auguste Orts had been contemplating the idea of launching such an initiative for a long time, it was with the arrival of Anna Manubens in the Auguste Orts team that this project finally materialised. Anna had previously organised the "Artists' Film Pitch" at the LOOP Festival in Barcelona in 2012, having served for several years as artistic director of the festival. For "On&For", she spent months coaching the artists, producers and professional participants – it was very important that everyone came well prepared to the meetings. This meant that the guests had seen previous work by the artists and had read the projects. The work session tables were configured with extreme care, knowing that in such a situation, having the right people in the room was vital to the success of the discussion. This was done in complicity with everyone involved. It also required thinking about variables such as the place and environment where the

meetings would take place, allowing enough time for social interaction and developing the proper context for “On&For” to inscribe itself in.

Unlike FIDLab and Art:Film which take place at film festivals, attended by film industry professionals, “On&For” chose to associate itself with an art fair, which facilitated attracting curators, collectors and representatives of art institutions to the meetings.

In many ways, the development of “On&For” echoes the conception of Auguste Orts eight years ago. “On&For” was born out of a desire to *“generate a specific context that would be conceived in response to the very specific modus operandi of artists’ film production”*. Auguste Orts was funded by Herman Asselberghs, Sven Augustijnen, Manon de Boer and Anouk De Clercq – four artists based in Brussels, all working with film and video. Traditional film producers were then ill suited to negotiate with museums; art institutions did not understand the requirements of film production. These four artists felt the need to create their own production and distribution platform, shaped to the image of their specific needs and capable of moving at ease between the art and film contexts and models.

Auguste Orts is not only at the service of the four founding artists. The intention from the beginning was to share the expertise that would be gained, as “On&For” also demonstrates. Each year Auguste Orts takes on one external project, which is generally mentored by one of the four artists. Until now Auguste Orts has produced work by other artists such as Aglaia Konrad, Olivier Zabat, Dora Garcia Sirah Foighel Brutmann & Eitan Efrat or Wendelien van Oldenborgh.

Development of “On&For”

The selection of projects was an essential question in the development of “On&For”. Auguste Orts did not feel equipped to launch an open call like FIDLab and then negotiate hundreds of applications – also because financing was only in place shortly before the event. It was decided that instead of projects, three other producers would be invited to each select an artist with whom they were already collaborating on a project. These producers should represent different approaches to production, as the goal was also to be able to share production strategies and experiences.

Finding the producers was not an easy task; surprisingly (or not) there are not many equivalent organisations to Auguste Orts. Many factors had to be taken into account. It was important to preserve a geographical balance, and that at least half of the projects would be international. Budget restrictions meant that projects were limited to Europe. In the end, none of the other organisations that were invited to take part in “On&For” is first and foremost a producer, a fact which is of course significant and that again proves the flexibility and hybridity that characterise artists’ moving image production.

In Belgium, Contour’s mission is to promote the creation and exhibition of artists’ moving image. Its main activity is a biennial exhibition of moving image art that takes place deeply embedded in the architecture of the city of Mechelen. Contour proposed An van. Dienderen’s project *Skin/Blush*. van. Dienderen is one of the artists that have been commissioned to produce work for the coming Biennial curated by Nicola Setari.

LUX is an agency for the support and promotion of artists’ moving image. Based in London, their main activity is distribution, although they are also involved in education, publication, commissioning and exhibition. LUX had been associated with “On&For” from the start, but not as a potential producer. The organisation is planning to expand its activities even further and to become a production platform that, unlike Auguste Orts, will be project-based, not artist-based. LUX proposed *Crippled Symmetries*, a new project by Beatrice Gibson produced by Mike Sperlinger, formerly of LUX.

Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers is a space of research and creation at the outskirts of Paris, which organises a programme of artists' residencies. In the context of her residency, Romana Schmalisch is currently realising the project "La Choréographie du Travail", a series of lecture performances that will later develop into the film project *Labour Power Plant*. The film is co-directed with Robert Schlicht and co-produced by Olivier Marboeuf (a producer at Spectre and also director of *Khiasma* in Les Lilas) who was also invited to take part in "On&For".

Among the Auguste Orts artists, Sven Augustijnen is the one whose projects tend to demand larger budgets, longer periods of preproduction and the formation of complex production strategies. Just as his previous film *Spectres*, *Fierté Nationale* is an ambitious documentary project that will require an elaborate articulation of partnerships and support from both the film and art worlds. This is why Auguste Orts chose *Fierté Nationale* for the "On&For" meeting. Having taken the same project to Rotterdam just a few months earlier, it was also interesting to compare the two experiences, and to shape the "On&For" encounter from the knowledge gained during the ART:FILM pitch.

The producers and the artists were all actively involved in selecting and inviting the guests for their tables, in discussion with Anna Manubens. For many, this dialogue between "On&For" and the participants was one of the most innovative aspects of the encounter. In this way, it was possible to reach beyond Auguste Orts' network and supplement it with those of each organisation and each artist. It emerged quite soon that the participants were more interested in inviting art professionals, and correspondingly that art professionals were more receptive to the invitation, than those from the film industry. This could be partly explained by the context of the Art Fair, which meant that many of the "On&For" guests were already planning to visit Brussels that weekend, or that would be happy to do so. In that sense, Auguste Orts developed a partnership with the fair and BAM's Curators Programme.

"On&For" - what happened

The work sessions happened simultaneously on Friday morning and were not open to the public. They were scheduled to last 1h30, although in reality they all went on for almost two hours and could have lasted longer. They took place in separate meeting rooms at VAF following a welcome breakfast and introduction by Anna Manubens.

The participants in each table were:

Crippled Symmetries: Beatrice Gibson (artist), Benjamin Cook (LUX, London), Mike Sperlinger (producer), Mihnea Mircan (Extra City, Anwterp), Krist Gruijthuijsen (Grazer Kunstverein), Jean-Conrad & Isabelle Lemaître (private collectors), Kate Gray (Collective, Edinburgh), Dirk De Wit (BAM, Ghent) + Anna Manubens (Auguste Orts, observer). Note: Will Bradley (Kunsthall Oslo) was unable to attend.

Skin/Blush: An van. Dienderen (artist), Steven Op de Beeck (Contour, Mechelen), Nicola Setari (Contour, curator), Frank Maes (Emergent, Veurne), Rolf Quaghebeur (Argos, Brussels), Helena Kritis (Beursschouwburg, Brussels), Noor Mertens (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam), Frédéric De Goldschmidt (private collector) + Natalie Gielen (Contour, observer)

Fierté Nationale: Sven Augustijnen (artist), Marie Logie (Auguste Orts), Jan Mot (gallerist), Bernard Blistène (Centre Pompidou, Paris), Isabel Carlos (Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon), Philippe Van Cauteren (SMAK, Ghent), Andrea Lissoni (Tate Modern, London), Emilie Bujes (independent curator) + Ann Goossens (Auguste Orts, observer)

Labour Power Plant: Romana Schmalisch (artist), Robert Schlicht (artist), Mathilde Villeneuve (Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers), Olivier Marboeuf (Spectre/Khiasma, Paris), Zoe Gray (independent curator), Pascale Cassagnau (CNAP, Paris), Christophe Slagmuylder (KFDA,

Brussels), Valerie Verhack (M Museum, Leuven), Sophie Goltz (NBK Berlin), Francesco Manacorda (Tate Liverpool), Sander Vanhellemont (VAF, Brussels) + Maria Palacios Cruz (observer)

As in any discussion, the dynamics of each session were different, depending on the personalities present and the synergies between them. Of the four, An van. Dienderen and Beatrice Gibson were the only ones that had prepared a more formal presentation. In the other cases, a brief introduction quickly turned into a collective discussion. The guests had questions almost immediately, which again proved that they had come well prepared.

In three of the four groups, the discussion revolved primarily around conceptual and methodological questions. It was not until towards the end of the sessions that more practical and financial aspects were discussed, often when there was not much time left.

Sven Augustijnen's table was different. The project was discussed very briefly, and the conversation turned into one about how the film could be realised and who could get involved. It also touched on to the more general art/film discussions in which Augustijnen's work was used as a case study, to share ways in which institutions approach production, acquisition and development. The participants in Augustijnen's table had almost all previously worked with him and they were all familiar with *Spectres*. It would seem that in the visual arts, it is not so much about the project, but about the trust in the artist. Knowing Augustijnen's work was key for the guests in his session to quickly understand the intricacies of his new project and trust him with it. The presence of Jan Mot, who represents Augustijnen commercially, testifies to a complicit relationship between Auguste Orts and the gallery (it is also Manon de Boer's) and to a quite unique interest from the gallerist's side in the development of the artists' projects. The fact that Auguste Orts organised "On&For" and had previously taken part in film markets (also with the same project) might be a factor that partly explains why the dynamics of this table were so different to the other three. Augustijnen and Marie Logie sought to accomplish the kind of conversation that they wanted "On&For" to facilitate.

Something unexpected happened in An van. Dienderen's group. Instead of giving way to further one-to-one follow up between the artist and the guests, the conversation at "On&For" has resulted in the constitution of an informal group that wishes to continue meeting regularly to discuss the progress of the film. A second meeting took place on June 2nd in Brussels at Beursschouwburg. Geographical proximity made this possible of course (they are all based in Belgium and the Netherlands), but beyond that, the fact that van. Dienderen was sharing her project with them at a very early stage made them all feel somehow collectively responsible. This sense of developing a project as a collective discussion is also present in the way that Nicola Setari is developing the next Contour Biennial.

Following a lunch break, which allowed the participants of the different tables to get together, most relocated to Art Brussels to listen to the roundtable "Acquiring film and video: What/How do we own?". The speakers included some of the "On&For" participants and guests (Beatrice Gibson, Benjamin Cook, Andrea Lissoni, Anna Manubens) and Haro Cumbusyan (private collector) and Chris Hammond (MOT international). Although the roundtable was part of the fair's STAGE programme, it served to expand and contextualise some of the discussions that had been had, and were to be had the following day, on the role of collectors in relation to production. The starting point for the discussion was the confusion that surrounds the "ownership" of a moving image art work, and the difference between owning an "object" and owning "rights". If the copy is the same as the original, what does it mean to have a limited edition? The roundtable elucidated the audience on the practice of editioning film and video. Chris Hammond explained that in the case of MOT international, editions are generally limited to three. The artist keeps one of the editions (still referred to as the artist's proof), which agencies

such as LUX can distribute on their behalf. The concept of collecting as a means to support production was also raised.

On Saturday morning, an Open Workshop with all the artists and producers, and an audience of around 30 people, was the occasion to compare expectations and experiences, share feedback, and furthermore reflect on the initiative, the pitching format and the issues at stake. Participation was free, but was limited to 30 in order to facilitate interaction by preserving a certain sense of proximity and shared responsibility over the discussion. The audience – a mixture of artists, filmmakers, producers, students – was keen to get involved in the dialogue and conversation flourished. The result was somewhere between a public critical debrief and an exchange on methodologies among colleagues (on both sides of the room) and students. The discussion ranged from an initial definition of terms, such as the above-quoted definitions of “producer” and “production” to the dangers of crowdsourcing and the dubiously recurrent idea of “professionalisation”. The conversation also functioned as a collective assessment of “On&For” in relation to other production-facilitating scenarios.

One of the key aspects that were debated was the political dimension of “On&For”, as well as the necessity to defend such precious initiatives, which not only protect the artists and the value of their work but also are thought for and with them.

Expectations vs outcome. What have we learnt ?

- Synchronicity

One of the intentions behind “On&For” was to match the long gestation time of a film project with the long programming process of an art institution. As the constitution of a discussion group around An van. Dienderen’s project manifests, curators and institutions are happy to be involved from the beginning in a form of collective creativity. They can also participate in thinking about different ways in which a project can be adapted to their spaces and also can coexist as a “film” version. An important point is that the production of artists’ moving image includes distribution and presentation, not only financially but also conceptually and creatively.

- Money vs. content

The project was devised and conceived to facilitate a hands-on approach. The discussions focused primarily on conceptual, intellectual and artistic questions. The artists and producers were very satisfied with the sessions and did not appear to regret that conversations around financial and logistical issues had not always been achieved. As Olivier Marboeuf explained, a “workshop” situation where there can be creative exchange and financing are two different things and it is difficult to have them both at the same time. Or as An van. Dienderen put it, money can sometimes hijack a conversation on content.

In hindsight it would have been difficult for the institutions that were present to come forward and offer a concrete participation in one of the projects.

In the case of institutions, involvement is also a long process that usually involves more than one decision-maker. However “On&For” also highlighted the necessity, as Ben Cook pointed out during the open workshop, to learn from film industry contexts to “talk money”.

Some of the seeds that were planted have already produced some concrete results. Collective Gallery in Edinburgh will become a co-producer of Gibson’s project. Romana Schmalisch & Robert Schlicht will apply to the Image-Mouvement fund at CNAP, whose representative Pascale Cassagnau was present at their work session. Frédéric De Goldschmidt, who is a film producer in addition to being a curator and collector, has agreed to use his production company to support van. Dienderen in her application to Francophone film funds in Belgium.

- Feedback

There was a general consensus that all artists and producers received valuable feedback from their meetings. As some said, it is not only rare, but also a privilege to have someone's focused attention for 1h30. In a film pitch situation at a film festival, there is hardly any conceptual feedback for the artists, and here there was the sense that the feedback had in itself made the experience of "On&For" worthwhile for the participants. For most of the participants it was the very first time that the projects were being discussed with others.

Even before the "On&For" weekend, Romana Schmalisch found that the discussions with Auguste Orts about the concept of the film had been extremely helpful for her and Robert Schlicht. She also remarked that the diversity of guests (art institutions, film funds, festivals, independent curators) "*fostered a climate for an intense discussion all around the table*".

In a sense, the sessions functioned as a sort of laboratory, which, unlike one-to-one meetings, built a community around a project to think and work together. As Mike Sperlinger commented the next day, there was great generosity in the exchange.

The feedback from the participants was also positive in regards to the public discussion. They felt that it was fruitful because it was specific and did not get into the usual theoretical art/film debate.

- Collective

Meeting a series of people together instead of one after the other creates a group. In An van Dienderen's table, the fragility of sharing created complicities. As Beatrice Gibson put it the next day, the partnerships that are put into place can shape the result of the film. There was overall a feeling that conversations had started that would develop over a long period of time. Moreover those who were invited but could not attend are now aware of the project and may get involved at a later stage. According to Olivier Marboeuf, participating in "On&For" has given a visibility to the project that is valuable itself.

The context also allowed potential partners in the project to meet each other. Generally, the challenge is to get the first co-producer on board with a project. Other co-producers are more likely to come along when a project has already received some support. By allowing all to meet together, "On&For" enhanced collective determination.

- Value

Just as the question of the cultural differences between art and film, the question of value was one that kept coming back in the discussions. Museums wonder what they get back in giving support to something that will have a life outside their institution. Recoupment policies from film funds can make it difficult for artists to work with other partners. There was a general sense that "value" needed to be redefined within parameters specific to the field of artists' moving image. The value of the "On&For" experience is a good example, one that was not defined in the same terms as a film festival market. As Beatrice Gibson noted "*The form of On&For also allowed for a set of more intangible outcomes (such as conversation or the generation of a new relationship) to emerge as equally valuable, if not more so, than more tangible ones such as money or audience numbers.*"

Notes for the future

What most of the participants missed was more interaction with the guests from the other groups. Many remarked that there were interesting people there that they never got to speak to.

Lunch was a missed opportunity as people were beginning to dissipate. For some, the fair context should perhaps be rethought in the light of this. For Sven Augustijnen, had there been an afternoon session, people would not have left before they got to know each other. For Ben Cook, a solution would be a complementary public pitch to which anyone could attend and which would allow all the guests to know about all the projects. Something to consider for a future edition of “On&For” would be how to integrate this idea of a public pitch without losing the focus on the long, in depth and intimate discussions during the work sessions. Olivier Marboeuf has also pointed to the necessity of setting up an open call for the selection of projects. Something else that needs to be thought further is how to encourage the discussion on financial and practical aspects of the production, without money “hijacking the conversation”.

There was a general sense that something special had been achieved, something that ought to be continued. During the Open Workshop many were those who asked about the future of the initiative. Auguste Orts is presently considering the continuation of “On&For”, which could involve a different setting and new partners. Even though Brussels provides a central location, with a particular context in which many organisations are already active in bridging the gap between the visual and audiovisual sectors, it might be interesting to explore other frameworks such as film festivals or other fairs in other countries. As the “pilot” nature of the “On&For” project highlighted, the formula is open and flexible, which as Sven Augustijnen defends “*does not mean not articulated, but on the contrary more precise*”.

Addendum to the previous report ***- Published in December 2014, 8 months later -***

By the end of 2014, two of the four projects that participated in the pilot edition of “On&For Production” are already *in production*. An van. Dienderen wrapped the shoot of *Skin/Blush* at the beginning of November, one month after the project received funding from VAF’s Filmlab commission. A first phase of *Crippled Symmetries* by Beatrice Gibson was shot in the summer, with financial support from The Elephant Trust. It resulted in a short film *F for Fibonacci* which, although connected to the larger project, also exists as an independent entity. *F for Fibonacci* was shown during Gibson’s first solo exhibition with the Laura Bartlett gallery in London (16 October-23 November 2014). Its theatrical premiere at IFFR in January will be followed by other festival screenings, including *Courtisane* in Belgium.

Both *Skin/Blush* and *Crippled Symmetries* also have foreseeable dates of completion. This is due to exhibition being incorporated in the production process: An van. Dienderen’s film will premiere in Mechelen at Contour 2015 (29 August to 8 November 2015), whilst Gibson will present a further installment of *Crippled Symmetries* at Collective Gallery in Edinburgh, June 2015, and the final film in the context of an exhibition at Graz Kunstverein in 2016.

Crippled Symmetries provides a case-study example of how to maximise the potential of an initiative such as “On&For”. All of the relationships that were established during the work session around the project have continued to develop, both advancing and shaping the production process. Collective Gallery and Graz Kunstverein have now become co-producers and will not only present the “outcome” of the project but also contribute financially to its realisation. There is also an ongoing conversation with Extra City in Antwerp, where *F for Fibonacci* will be shown in the context of a group show. All this would appear to indicate that the right people were invited to sit around the table at “On&For” and that the complicity between the artist, the producers and Auguste Orts in the preparation of the work session was a key element to the success of the initiative.

At the same time, Beatrice Gibson and her producers Mike Sperlinger and Ben Cook (LUX) have not limited themselves to the opportunities that arose during “On&For”. Further partnerships and funding possibilities have been sought and established since April. The most significant is the development funding received from FLAMIN (Film London Artists Moving Image Network). FLAMIN proposes a two-stage commissioning scheme. First, three applicants are shortlisted and invited to apply for production funding. These artists take part in a development programme, the costs of which are covered by FLAMIN, which also provides a 1.000 GBP bursary per project for the artist’s time. The chosen projects are usually awarded production grants at the end of this process. Production funding (35.000 GBP), if awarded, is confirmed at the end of January 2015. Completion of the films is expected within 12 months of the end of the development period.

The work session around *Skin/Blush* resulted in the surprising constitution of an informal work group around the project, which met at the beginning of June 2014 at Beursschouwburg. There have been no further meetings to date, but An van. Dienderen intends to organise one in the course of editing, in order to share with the others the film in progress and respond to their feedback. Of the four projects that participated in “On&For”, *Skin/Blush* is the only case of “self-production”: An van. Dienderen is producing the film via her own structure Elektrischer Schnellseher. This instance of self-production has nonetheless been very much supported by Contour, and by other organisations such as KASK and Argos. Rolf Quaghebeur of Argos, having long represented An van. Dienderen’s work as a distributor, participated in the work session at “On&For” and has since become a co-producer of the project. Van. Dienderen also received the support of Auguste Orts in the preparation of her funding application for VAF. The dialogue that was in place in preparation of the work session continued after the meeting in April and for van. Dienderen, VAF’s decision to back the project “*was inspired by the fact that the project was developed in the context of On&For Production*”. The support that Marie Logie and Anna Manubens continued to offer to the project is symptomatic of the approach and ethos of “On&For”. It’s not a “one off”, but a long-term process.

The other two projects – *Labour Power Plant* by Romana Schmalisch & Robert Schlischt and *Fierté Nationale* by Sven Augustijnen – are still awaiting funding decisions that will determine their production calendar. They have both received development funding thus far, but funds are not yet in place for these projects to move into production phase.

Spectre Productions, co-producer of Schmalisch & Schlischt’s project, has received a grant from CNAP/Image Mouvement for the development of the film. Pascale Cassagnau of CNAP was one of the participants in their table at “On & For”.

Fierté Nationale had already received development funding from CNAP, as well as from Willame Foundation and WIP Wallonie Images Production. Following the “On&For” meeting, two of the institutions present at the table, SMAK and Gulbenkian Foundation, expressed their commitment towards the project. A project such as *Fierté Nationale* implies and requires a larger budget than the other three that participated in “On&For”, which also means a longer gestation period.

When the participants were asked for an evaluation immediately following the “On&For” meetings in April, they were all very positive and enthusiastic about the discussions that took place and the feedback they had received. Eight months later, we can observe that the meetings actually led to concrete collaborations, and that having taken part in “On&For” brought a visibility to the projects that has proven important and useful in securing other partnerships and funding opportunities.