



BALLROOM

1. Post uit Hessdalen

Post uit Hessdalen (PUH) is the creator duo Stijn Gruppig (film-maker and circus artist) and Ine Van Baelen (director). Together they create fascinating hybrid performances **that showcase juggling, music and scenography**. With their quirky circus and musical theatre, they reflect on phenomena such as time, space and our virtual future by literally trying to escape time (*Poolnacht*, 2016), for example; by depicting the rhythm of the rat race with bouncing balls (*PAKMAN*, 2016); or by confronting the threat of robots by performing with them on stage (*Man Strikes Back*, 2020).

2. New creation: *Ballroom*



Tease me please

<https://vimeo.com/808339108/c6ec3a6475?share=copy>

! Important when watching: everything in this video is unedited and was performed live.
'The problem is not to invent space and certainly not to reinvent it (there are enough individuals already who believe they know what is good for our environment ...). The problem is rather to

question space, or more simply, to read space. For what we call everydayness is not obvious but opaque: a form of blindness, or deafness, a sort of anaesthesia.'

In the same way that, in *Species of Spaces*, Georges Perec tries to define 'space' in words and language, in *Ballroom* we explore the **concept of space – in both the physical and mental sense** – with bouncing balls and musical objects. This is part of our continued artistic research into *Homo mobilis* and its relationship with (the experience of) time and space as social concepts.

Juggler Stijn Gruppings has been throwing bouncing balls against various objects for over twenty years, in order to discover the impact of a throw and the subsequent trajectory of the ball. The balls bounce through space and create a linear pattern that is **by turns graceful and rhythmic, complex and powerful**, ending up (if all goes well) in the juggler's hands again. Stijn throws the ball through a known trajectory and then catches it: that's the basic idea.

In *Ballroom*, we **break through** that **most elementary aspect of juggling**. What if the bouncing balls were to break out of the bouncing surfaces and, using magic skills, move freely through space without hitting anything? By playing on speed and slowness, by suddenly changing direction or 'pausing', the balls become thrilling, **unpredictable antagonists of the performer**.

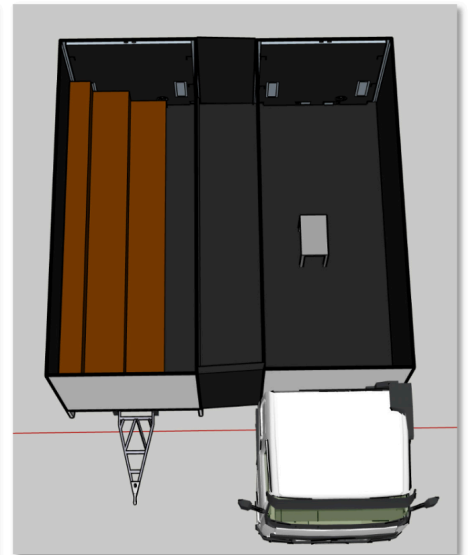
Ballroom is the fifth collaboration with **musician and composer Frederik Meulyzer**. Meulyzer is uniquely perceptive to the musicality of the bouncing ball. On this occasion, he is joined by **musician and sound artist Jochem Baelus**. Inside a truck, brutalist analogue sound sculptures form the playing surface (see illustration). It is **through the actions of the juggler that these sound objects generate live music**. This 'inner world' then enters into dialogue with the outside world: field recordings are added to create a multi-layered soundscape, which allows the audience to glide through different spaces, just like the bouncing balls – speeding up, slowing down, widening, narrowing.

PUH sets out into the world again with **an intimate performance inside a truck**. The truck and trailer form **a small theatre** with a stand that can accommodate about forty spectators (see image). In the tradition of the nomadic circus, we attract a broad public (ages 5 to 105) in squares, parks, schools and neighbourhoods. The wordless nature of the performance, the intimate setting and the balance of sight and sound make the performance widely accessible.

Inside the truck, visual artist Lodewijk Heylen sets to work with **concrete**, an artificial, stone-like material that feels unwieldy, heavy and unchanging. Without getting lost in cliché optical illusions, the scenography helps to tear down expectations. Nothing is what it seems, everything moves differently than in the real world. It becomes a play of perspective and contrast, light and darkness, scale and proportion.



SET-UP



STAND & SCENE

3. Ballroom credits

Creation Stijn Gruppung and Ine Van Baelen

Performance Stijn Gruppung

Direction Ine Van Baelen

Music Frederik Meulyzer and Jochem Baelus

Scenography Lodewijk Heylen

Choreography Kinga Jaczewska

Lighting design Lucas Van Haesbroeck

Outside eye Koen Haagdorens

Co-production CIRKL, Theater op de Markt, MiramirO and Perpodium

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Distribution Klaartje Brouns (JE BURO)

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4. Ballroom practical information

Ballroom will premiere at the MAD festival in Antwerp, 10–13 April 2025.

Max. 3 performances per day x 42 spectators (with 1 to 2 places for wheelchairs)

4 hours set-up time / 1 hour dismantling time

Parking space of 10 x 10 metres

1 x 16A power connection

1 technical assistant, 1 audience supervisor, night surveillance

PS: At first, it would seem that there is nothing sustainable about a diesel truck, but we weighed the pros and cons. After all, a scenography made of concrete is exceedingly difficult to move to a theatre hall. The truck is the means for transporting staff, decor and props as well as the stage. This means we don't need any infrastructure, theatre technicians to load and unload, we use only 16 amps of electricity, and the truck can remain parked for several days without depriving others of playing time in the theatre hall.

5. Contact

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