



NTGENT

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# It's not about Climate Change

4 October 2024 | Ghent, Belgium

## OPEN LAB PROGRAM



**Text and acting:** Mary Ann Manahan, Philsan Osman, Pablo Casella, Anneleen Kenis and Lara Staal

**Coaching & advice:** Luanda Casella

## OPEN LAB CONTENT

*Two artists and three scientists form the Cross Cultural Research Group STAGES. They harness the power of language, music, and words to reconstruct how the climate crisis originated. In particular: how humans became a destructive species, nurtured by a hundred years of so-called civilization. They bring, like a musical choir, stories that summon ghosts and demons from the past. Through the invention of the steam engine and disastrous nuclear experiments, the group moves towards the present and the future. Can we truly solve everything with solar energy from the Sahara and the genetic modification of trees?*



## ARTISTS INVOLVED

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### LARA STAAL

Lara Staal, born 1984 in Zwolle, The Netherlands, is a researcher, writer and curator. She studied theatre pedagogy at ArtEZ in Arnhem and theatre science and dramaturgy at the University of Amsterdam. Between 2013 and 2016, she worked as a programmer at Frascati where she developed various sociopolitical programmes in which alliances were created between art and other fields on the basis of shared urgencies. Examples of this are International Law, whose Law? (2013), Out of State (2015) and Other Stories, finding more than me (2017).

From a growing interest in developing innovative forms within which dialogue and reflection can take place, she developed the Congress of Utopia in collaboration with Jonas Staal in 2016.

Since 2017 she has been working as a freelance curator in the performing arts and has developed works such as *The Evening of Anger* (together with rapper Gideon Everduim) and *Europe on Trial* (together with human rights activist Yoonis Osman Nuur). In addition to her work as curator and programmer, she writes for professional journals such as *rekto:verso*, *Theatermaker*, *Mister Motley* and *Etcetera*.

In the 2020-2021 season Lara Staal made the short film *The State of Justice* at NTGent about the improper treatment of refugees in Europe, and part of a series in which she focuses on several fundamental values in our society. In 2021-2022 season, she creates the performance *Dissident* together with six so called 'problem cases' from schools in Ghent. Her next project for NTGent will have its premiere in March 2025 and will talk about the (Belgian) imprisonment system.

## **LINDAH LEAH NYIRENDA**

Lindah Leah Nyirenda, was born in Ndola, Zambia, in 1984 and grew up in Belgium. She has a fascination for language, history and mythology. She obtained a bachelor's degree in English-French translation from UGent and then studied journalism at Odisee Hogeschool Brussel. In 2009, she won the HUB Poetry Prize (now Odisee). Together with poetry collective "Wolves of La Mancha," she made radio at Urgent.FM. This led to a diversity internship at Radio 2 East Flanders and a job as a guide at VRT.

Since 2013, she has been performing as a slam poet and spoken word artist. Thus she could be seen/heard in 'We Orchestrate Words' (KVS & Brussels Jazz Orchestra), Afropolitan festival (BOZAR), Zomerfabriek (Mama's Open Mic) and Museumnacht (S.M.A.K.), among others. In 2018 she toured with the Dutch Poëziebus and in 2021 she won the Belgian preselection of the international slam poetry competition of the Berlin-based WICKED Projects.

She currently combines teaching assignments with performing arts, translation work and copywriting. Lindah Leah was one of the women whose testimonies served as inspiration for Dalilla Hermans' play "Her(e)" (NTGent, 2020). In 2021, she can be seen in the play 'Killjoy Quiz' (Luanda Casella, NTGent).

As an activist/artist, she regularly participates in panels on racism, gender-based violence and discrimination against the LGBTQI+ community. She is also a regular member of Gloria Baffour's YouTube panel Unheard with GiGi.

## **ANNELEEN KENIS**

*Anneleen Kenis is a critical human geographer working on the (de)politicisation of environmental issues. Before joining Brunel, Anneleen held positions as a lecturer in Society and Environment (King's College London) and a senior research fellow at the Centre for Sustainable Development (Ghent University) and at the Division of Geography (University of Leuven). She enjoyed visiting scholarships at the Department of Human Geography (Lund University), the Environmental Research Group (King's College London) and the Department of Geography (University of Cambridge).*

## **MARY ANN MANAHAN**

Mary Ann Manahan is a Filipina feminist activist researcher and doctoral assistant with the Conflict Research Group (CRG) of the Department of Conflict and Development Studies in Ghent University. Prior to her academic post, she worked with an activist NGO and various social movements advocating for redistribution, environmental, gender and social justice, and alternative development for 17 years. Her academic research interests encompass a broad range of topics in land and forest politics, socio-ecological dynamics, social movement activism, and beyond development. She aspires for radical collective actions that dismantle systems and structures of oppression and facilitate lasting systemic transformations.

## **PHILSAN OSMAN**

Philsan Osman is an educator at Avansa East Brabant. In addition to her teaching role, she is pursuing studies in African languages and cultures. Philsan also volunteers with Black History Month, Civic Duty, and Spijker Magazine. She is a co-author of the book *Who Do We Want to Care For? Ecofeminism as Inspiration*.

## **PABLO CASELLA**

*Pablo Casella is a composer, song-writer and multi-instrumentalist. His ear for harmonies is unique in contemporary music. With skills and virtuosity he knows how to paint landscapes through sound, emotions through melody, power through rhythm.*

*In the theatre scene he is active as a soundtrack composer, producer and live musician; he contributed to *Antigone in The Amazon* (Milo Rau/NTGent/MST), *Ferox Tempus*, *KillJoy Quiz* and *Elektra Unbound* (Luanda Casella & NTGent) and *BAM!*, *Saperlipopette*, *LOS* (Ultima-Thule).*

*Pablo Casella has also been part of several music projects, playing in festivals such as Dour, Les Ardentes, Dranouter, Gent Jazz and Jazz Middelheim. With his own band, Little Dots, he's released two albums with V2 records (2014 and 2018), to which he composed, arranged and co-produced. Little Dots was a resident group at Ancienne Belgique, Brussels. Their tours included support acts for Gabriel Rios and Hooverphonic, in venues such as AB (Brussels), De Roma (Antwerpen) and Paradiso (Amsterdam), and festivals such as Gent Jazz and Eurosonic.*

