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Column van Loek Zonneveld, 9 juni, de Theaterschool

What can we do against the upcoming Ice Age?

Yesterday the Minister of Culture, Mrs. Jet Bussemaker published her middle/longterm vision on the Dutch arts.

The title is: *Space for Culture*.

Main conclusion: there is very *little space* for culture.

Mrs. Bussemaker however is in the *giving* mood: extra support is foreseen for the Metropole Orchestra and the Tropen Museum. By the way - that's the funny thing about the arts in the Netherlands: first they ruin and neglect your institution, till death us part, and then, on an unexpected moment, there is that smiling politician at your doorstep, singing: '*We're going to support and help you, hip-hip-hurrah!*'

And always in that awfull jolly tone, that makes me want to strangle this politicians. And always in those empty words.

Cultural education.

Talent development.

'Horrible, horrible, oh, most horrible.'

But, as I said, Mrs. Bussemaker is in the giving mood. She has found some 18 million euro on her budget for the Arts. Extra. Every year. For the next four years. First the government steals four times twohundred million euro, in the last four years. Now the government returns four times 18.6 million in the next four years.

My father would say: 'A jolly good cigar from your own cigar-box – so who's giving exactly *what* to *who*?'

Let's call it a low budget show. Low budget politics.

Well, ladies and gentlemen

of the future in the arts and culture in the Netherlands, let's face it:

we are entering a new Ice Age.

Let's make some dark remarks about that

One. As good as everything which is small, adventurous and little in the performing arts, has a good chance to die and a very bad one to survive, within the next four years.

Small theatergroups and danceformations, experimental theaterhouses, so-called breeding-grounds ('broedplaatsen') – their fate is to disappear.



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So ... We, you, no: we, must demand, require and claim that more and more and more *production-houses, studios, workshops, breeding-places, theater-laboratories* and *theatercollectives*, must be set-up, founded and established,

When the financial basis for all this is not yet there, just do it, and keep doing it.

Drive the civil servants in the arts totally mad with initiatives of all sorts.

L'imagination au pouvoir is not the worst of the slogans of the sixties.

Two. 'Art is not only for the elite' – this is the central thesis and device of Mrs. Bussemaker and her politicians.

Our counter-device, our counter-thesis is: '*Arts are - by definition - not existing to earn money or make profit. It is not forbidden. But it is not the primal aim. It's not why art is being done, it's not why art exists.*'

So ... We, you, no: we must chase & wave away the cold statistics from the arts. A *certain* percentage of artists own income, own earnings, revenues, earned by playing, dancing, making music, singing opera, doing performances, *a certain percentage* is reasonable.

But *not* the acclaimed 25%!

This is a ridiculous level and it must and may *not* be maintained (as Mrs. Bussemaker intends to do).

It *must* be lowered substantially.

And the obligation must disappear for all *young* artists, who just have began their long journey into the arts.

As Ivo van Hove stated here some months ago.

Three. In the end it is all about politics, *the highest of all arts!* – in the end it is all about taking care for all people instead of a few, it's all about organizing all sorts of solidarity.

So ... We, you, no: we must go into politics.

We must!

Not necessarily *party-politics*, but *thinking* politics.

So ... *we must make plans!!*

Not only for your own future in the arts, but for the whole, the entire, the complete, the integral.

Why shouldn't strong, big institutions in the performing arts adopt small groups. Without swallowing them up? Guarding both their authenticities. It's done before. Perhaps local, provincial and national governments can reward such initiatives with convenient tax measures? Why not?

So, let's make plans. Good plans. Clever plans. Concrete plans. Earthly plans.



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In 2016, round this time of the year, this government, the cabinet Rutte II, the cabinet of the FAT ME!, is going to fall, stumbling over budget-surpluses and tax-measures.

So ... we, you, no: we are probably too late.
Well, it's never too late to die in beauty.

I wish you a heavy summer with a lots of nightmares!