

Vloeistof / Cie Jozsef Trefeli - *Rarely By Chance*

On May 11th Vloeistof in collaboration with Compagnie Jozsef Trefeli, performed '*Rarely By Chance*' through, in and around our theatre building Die Nieuwe Vorst, Tilburg. This multi disciplinary work started very open in our theater garden, in which the audience was mysteriously divided into a number of groups in response to a number of questions. As if an inscrutable algorithm was put into action. It's interesting what already happens in your head as a spectator. You think, 'Okay, this is apparently my group now, I belong to this particular group, with these group mates.' But questions also come up like, 'Why am I assigned to this group? What are the other groups going to see? Are they having a very different experience?' In the garden you could still peek at the different groups, and it became clear that each group will indeed experience very different things. When the groups separate and the headphones are put on my group, one suddenly finds oneself in an immersive bubble together with our group mates. The performers lead the way in what you are about to see. It is magical what happened to my perspective of the spaces in our theater and the streets around it. This shift in the experience of the environment is tremendously cleverly done and made me think about what I was seeing all around me, and how my perspective of my environment is even just based on my own interpretation and experience. Afterwards I heard from the other groups that their paths had crossed, and that when they saw each other they couldn't make sense of what the others were doing. I was in the *Green Journey*, where we were the only ones who were completely separated from the other groups and did not meet them. Apart from the fact that this aroused curiosity, we were very much absorbed in the route in which our focus was on nature in the streets around the theater. A peaceful, mindful feeling grew. The use of multimedia resources, including dance, sound through wireless headphones, and film is strong and, along with how the environment is used, contribute to an immersive route.

Finally, when the groups enter the main hall one by one, you are again actually confronted with the other bubbles: they have experienced very distinctively, individual thoughts and feelings about their routes. So the bubbles are not only literally put back together, but mixed up a bit more again. All the performers also came together in the room, now all the same, as a uniform whole they first moved through the space, until they detached themselves from the group and their garments, and expressed their own identity. In a beautiful way they reflected that, yes, everyone experiences themselves as a unique individual, and we are in a way, but at the same time we are consciously or unconsciously also part of a bubble, which confirms itself more often than it questions itself. From start to finish, the performance is incredibly well thought out, both in terms of logistics and artistic content.

There are few performances in which my perspective on the environment has undergone such a shift and which, during and after the performance, raises questions in my mind about the bubble in which I live, and the experiences that people outside my bubble have. In this day and age, with turmoil in multiple areas of society and the world, and where developments of the internet and algorithms and their effects are cognitively almost impossible to understand, a performance like *Rarely By Chance* is, in my opinion, very urgent. It questions what we experience as reality every day, and how our experience is affected by things like algorithms on social media. At the same time, it made me realize that we cannot escape this, but that we can be aware of it and be critical and careful about it.

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Maartje van Zutphen – curator Theater De Nieuwe Vorst, NL