RED NOSES
In Laughter there is Hope

Clowning, music, & movement in healthcare

An Artistic Research Lab

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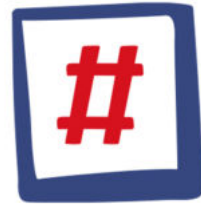
Introduction

Healthcare clowning uses humour, improvisation, and personal, empathetic connection to increase emotional wellbeing, strengthen social inclusion, and make environments more supportive. Among other tools, healthcare clowns regularly use music, rhythm, and movement.

Music and movement on their own have also been shown to have a positive impact on emotional and physical wellbeing. For people with different cognitive styles and abilities, such as people with dementia and children with mental disabilities, encounters with all three of these creative disciplines can be particularly transformative.

"Clowning, Music, and Movement: An Artistic Research Lab" was set up to explore the creative intersections between these different disciplines, with a focus on wellbeing. Using the methodology of action research, each participating artist designed a research question to explore in their own practice. The questions could be about anything, as long as they drew on two or more of the disciplines and were related to wellbeing. Findings were shared in a final workshop, in which each participant shared their experiences and learnings as a "gift" to the rest of the group.

Background

Research commissioned by RED NOSES International has highlighted the central role of music and movement in the work of healthcare clowns, particularly in relation to people with different cognitive abilities, such as elderly people with dementia, and children with mental disabilities.[1][2] While there is an extensive body of research on music and dance, including its impact on vulnerable populations, there is little work done on the interface between healthcare clowning and these disciplines. To begin to fill this gap, RED NOSES International and JAM Music University joined forces to deliver an artistic research lab that would bring together musicians, movers, and healthcare clowns.

Facilitators

The Lab was primarily designed and facilitated by three artistic experts, one to represent each discipline.

KATHARINA SENK AKA SENKI (RIGHT), MOVEMENT LEAD

Katharina is a movement facilitator, mover and researcher with a focus on wellbeing and inclusion. Katharina co-directed the Artistic Research Lab, engaging the participating movers and clowns in countless opportunities to explore movement coupled with deep reflections on what it brings to our lives and practice.

PATRICK L. VAN DEN BOOM (LEFT), HEALTHCARE CLOWNING LEAD

Patrick is an artist, clown, and teacher of clowning. Patrick runs Clownschool international, and supports RED NOSES International with workshops at the International School of Humor (ISH) and directly for partner organisations. Patrick facilitated learning around the philosophy of the clown and mentored participants on questions around the higher sensibilities, like the magic of being!

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[1] Harper, D. (2021). Clowning Connects Us: Baseline Evaluation. https://clownexus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/CN-Baseline-Report_04-05-21_withoutAnnex.pdf

[2] Paulauskaite, E.; Kubekova, V.; Lübbers, C. (2021). Children with Disabilities: Programme Evaluation. https://www.rednoses.eu/fileadmin/international/4_What_we_do/3_Scientific_Research/Disabled_Children/CarOEvaluationReport-2021_singlePages.pdf

JOHANNES STEINER (RIGHT), MUSIC LEAD

Johannes is a lecturer at JAM MUSIC LAB Private University for Jazz and Popular Music in Vienna and also teaches Group and Ensemble Musicianship at University Mozarteum Salzburg Department of Music Education in Innsbruck.

Two additional experts in healthcare clowning also supported the lab design and facilitation.

SCOTT WITMER, HEALTHCARE CLOWNING SUPPORT

Scott has been working as a professional healthcare clown in Vienna since 1992, when the profession was still very young. His ongoing clown discovery journey later led him to join the Red Noses Clowndoctors Austria in 2011. He has had thousands of clown visits with children, adults and seniors in healthcare facilities, and with refugees in Vienna and in Greece. Just before the initial 4-day workshop, Scott was asked to step in and lead the clowning exercises and reflection activities during the workshop. As a new, temporary member of the workshop leadership team, Scott actively supported the overall workshop and the other participants on their interdisciplinary journey toward a research question.

MARINA BAŽULIĆ (CENTRE), HEALTHCARE CLOWNING SUPPORT

Marina is an experienced clown and mentor, currently supporting RED NOSES International with artistic guidance. Marina supported coordination of the ARL and co-designed the overall approach and individual activities by the facilitators. Marina also provided one-on-one mentorship to participating clowns.

Two research experts led the design and facilitation of the research component of the lab.

MAGGIE ROESSLER, RESEARCH LEAD

Maggie is Head of Research and Learning Department at RED NOSES International and the mastermind behind the ARL. Maggie developed the concept of the ARL, secured funding for it, oversaw the selection of facilitators and participants, and facilitated the first Lab in Vienna in October.

ELMA PAULAUSKAITE (LEFT), RESEARCH LEAD

Elma runs a human rights consultancy Policy Impact Lab and supports RED NOSES International and its partner offices with evaluation and learning activities. Elma joined the ARL from the first lab in Vienna from when she had a coordinating role and developed the research component. Elma supported the participants in their search for a meaningful research question for them, and provided mentorship throughout the process of gathering and understanding the data.

Artistic Researchers

There were 11 artistic researchers in the lab, four identifying primarily as movers, and seven primarily as healthcare clowns. Artists identifying primarily as musicians were also invited to participate, but ultimately none were able to commit to the lab. However, several of the participating healthcare clowns also had a background in music.

The movers were identified through a selection process by movement facilitator Katharina Senk. The healthcare clowns were identified by RED NOSES member organisations and selected on the basis of CVs and motivation letters outlining their interest in the lab.

The movers were all Vienna-based at the time of the lab, coming from Austria, Canada and Italy. Participating healthcare clowns were selected by RED NOSES members from five countries: Austria, Croatia, Germany, Slovakia and Slovenia, and included people from these countries as well as Argentina, Ukraine and the US. Facilitators came from Austria, Croatia, Lithuania and the Netherlands and the US. Altogether, a total of 11 countries were represented. The Annex of research results features bios of each participant and an overview of their research question and findings.

Objectives and Expectations

Motivations behind the different actors involved in the ARL are best presented by the different participants in the process.

Facilitators' Objectives and Expectations

The facilitators that supported the artistic research lab aimed to explore questions around interdisciplinarity and what one or other discipline adds to the overall therapeutic effect of art. They were also excited about finding the words to explain their artistic work. Often, there is a perceived distance between artistic work, whose nature can be difficult to put into words, and research, which is usually written up as a text - like this report! The facilitators hoped to explore that tension between art and scientific language, and discover how they can feed and enrich each other.

"On my personal artistic level, I hoped to gain more clarity about but also more perspectives on my own artistic practice. Which I did and which I'm very grateful for. Also I'm grateful for my colleagues and for finding words together which reflect the complex internal processes of research. I´m happy I didn´t only gain new experiences but also words to share my experiences."
Katharina Senk, Movement Lead

"The main motivation for me was to compare the working methods of different disciplines. The many similarities, but also the small differences opened up new perspectives. The variety of different working methods was particularly impressive.
For me, this is precisely what represents the unbelievable and unique quality of artistic research."
Johannes Steiner, Music Lead

"For me the motivation to join was very clear. In a way, [the goal is] to put heart into words. It's not about words, and still to explain the work we need to put it into words, so we can get funding and support to keep the good work going. And to find out where we stand and keep reinventing ourselves. And for sure inspiring and mirroring and positive confrontation."
Patrick van den Boom, Healthcare Clowning Lead

Participants' Objectives and Expectations

The artistic research lab brought together four participants who identify primarily as movers and seven that identify primarily as healthcare clowns. The motivations of the different participants, as presented in the letters accompanying their applications, are presented below.

Skills

Participants wanted to explore disciplines they had some exposure to in the past but are not using in their everyday practice. For example, one of the dancers is also what in the healthcare clowning

world is referred to as baby clown - a newcomer to clowning. Several practicing healthcare clowns wanted to play more with singing or music more generally, as well as movement as non-verbal language.

Knowledge

Participants were experienced practitioners that engage in healthcare clowning, dance, music but also beyond - they write poetry, perform traditional and street theatre, play in the circus. The participants had an interest in understanding more about how the disciplines interact to form the unique mix they apply in their everyday practice. The ARL looked like an opportunity to develop not only the skills but also knowledge that the participants can keep drawing on in their practice.

> *"Curiosity is at the core of the clown - not knowing and wanting to know."*
> **Scott Witmer**

Participants were mostly less experienced in research than their artistic disciplines. So, for some, the motivation to join the lab was linked to learning how to conduct self-led research, and learning how to answer questions in a setting where they are supported by the group/facilitators.

Contributing and Sharing

The interdisciplinary background of most participants made people feel they have something to contribute. The participants were open and motivated to reflect and share - with each other but possibly also bigger audiences. They were motivated by the possibility not only to learn but to facilitate learning as part of their own professional development.

Wellbeing of Target Groups

Participants wanted to experiment more with the power of different mediums to touch and reach people for a bigger impact on the target groups. In their motivation letters, participants described how being present and drawing on all the artistic disciplines at their disposal can move hearts and minds into higher consciousness with therapeutic effect.

Personal Growth and Wellbeing

Some participants felt that the use of the different disciplines helped them develop professionally but also personally. They joined the artistic research lab wanting to become aware and open to the disciplines in order to develop as performers and as people. Many also came to increase their own wellbeing.

Risks and Fears

In the first participant survey, people shared that they were excited to take part in the lab. Yet the prospect of participating in artistic research also made people nervous. Finding a research question/topic and knowing how to be part of research were the most pressing issues for most of

the participants who participated in the survey (7/11). Some were nervous about the short timeframe of the artistic research lab, which was implemented over less than a three-month period. They worried that they would have to rush too much. Others were not sure they would deliver what is expected of them, and not everyone was comfortable having the attention on them on stage. Other participants were comfortable with everything and had no concerns.

RNI'S Objectives and Expectations

Artistic Excellence

RED NOSES International is invested in innovation and artist-led research. By providing artists with resources and funding to design and develop their own ideas, RED NOSES adopts a decentralized model of pursuing and discovering artistic excellence across its eleven country offices.

Reflection Skills

As a complement to this artistic exploration, RED NOSES also aims to encourage critical reflection and evaluation throughout the organisation. This includes both raising awareness of the importance of evaluation, as well as providing training and guidance in the relevant skills.

Partnerships

Finally, RED NOSES is committed to nurturing partnerships with other artistic and humanitarian organisations to promote common goals.
The artistic research lab brought together all three of these commitments, working together with new partners to nurture artistic development while also developing reflection and evaluation skills. In the specific content of this ARL, RED NOSES aimed to deepen a finding of earlier research, by exploring the unique potential of music and movement in healthcare clowning for reaching vulnerable groups.
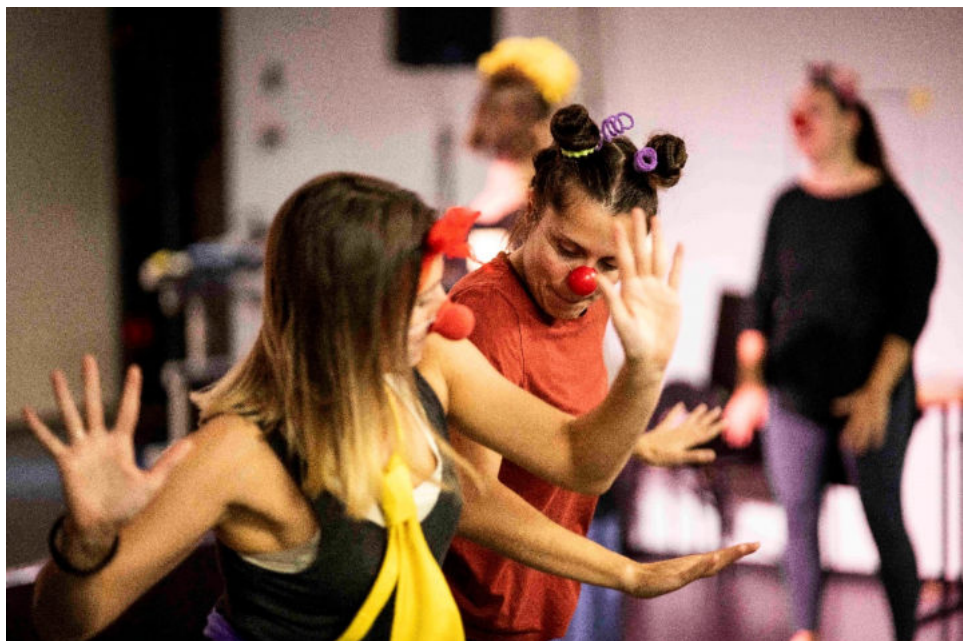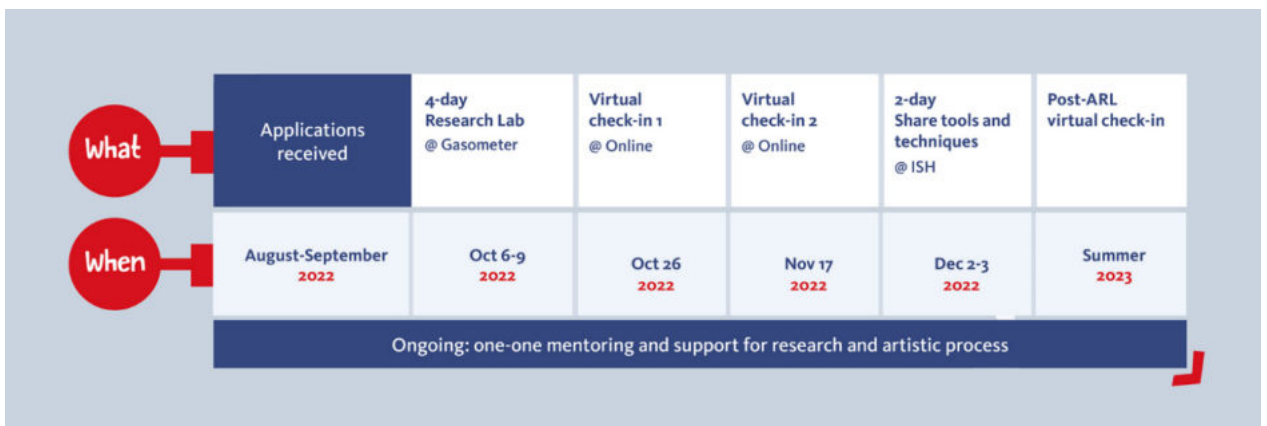
Research Process

Participating musicians, dancers, and clowns worked on individual research questions on how drawing inspiration from mixing dance, music and movement can enrich one's individual practice of applying art for wellbeing. All participants developed their own applied research project and shared their learnings and findings with the group.

Timeline

The artistic research lab took place from September to December 2022.

		4-day Research Lab @ Gasometer	Virtual check-in 1 @ Online	Virtual check-in 2 @ Online	2-day Share tools and techniques @ ISH	Post-ARL virtual check-in
What	Applications received					
When	August-September 2022	Oct 6-9 2022	Oct 26 2022	Nov 17 2022	Dec 2-3 2022	Summer 2023

Ongoing: one-one mentoring and support for research and artistic process

Lab Components

4-day Research Lab, Vienna, October 6-9 2022

FOCUS: Exploring the disciplines and developing individual research questions

DESCRIPTION: The 4-day Research Lab was dedicated to giving participants exposure to the disciplines represented in the ARL - clowning, movement and music. The facilitators took great care to apply approaches that are both accessible to practitioners from other disciplines and at the same time interesting and often new to experts in their discipline.

In addition to the activities centred on exploring the different disciplines, the first Research Lab included time to develop individual research questions. Several exercises got participants thinking and inspired about what they wanted to research. The approaches used included guided meditation, appreciative inquiry, embodiment of feelings around the research question and group discussions. The variety of methods allowed participants to explore and play with the idea of becoming "researchers". Time and space were set aside for facilitators and participants to share their vulnerabilities and find inspiration in non-verbal thought, as well as mindfully structured discussions.

The Toolbox of Exercises annexed to this report provides a list of the exercises used in this meeting.

OUTCOME: While few participants already had a clear research question by the end of the first Research Lab, many left with an inspiration and direction.

An additional outcome of the first Research Lab was a set of measures on how the facilitators could support the participants, including suggestions for the online check-ins, for the final Research Lab in December and for mentoring sessions throughout.

Mentoring one-on-one, virtual & in-person, October – December 2022

FOCUS: Bespoke support for the individual research projects

DESCRIPTION: In the period between the two live Research Labs in Vienna, participants were invited to reach out to the facilitator of choice for one-on-one sessions to receive support for their process. The majority of the participants' questions were about research, however all the facilitators supported the process.

The facilitators created an ongoing mapping of where participants stood in relation to the planned process, and also initiated one-on-one meetings as needed to make sure everybody stayed motivated, on track, and most importantly not stressed about their commitment to the Lab.

OUTCOME: All participants identified a research question and gathered data on it.
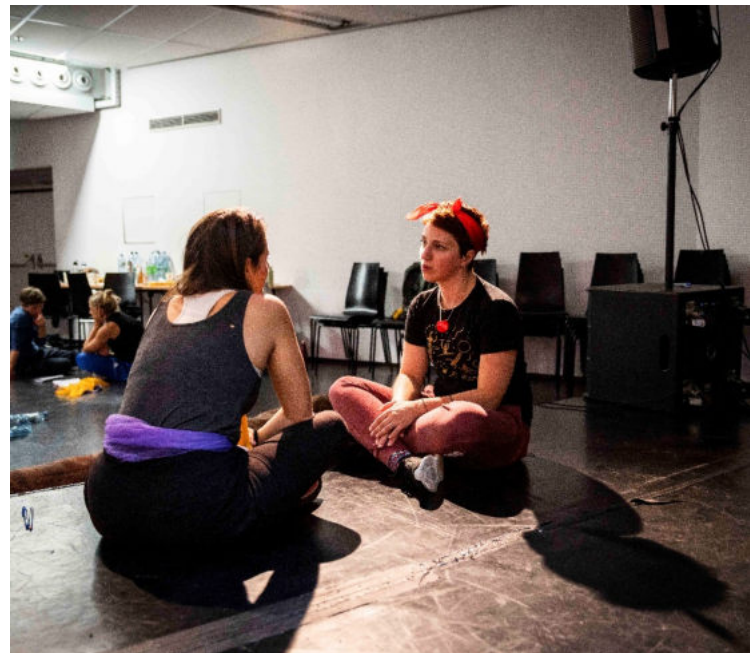
Group Check-In, Virtual, October 26 2022

FOCUS: Clarifying the research question and method

DESCRIPTION: The bulk of the meeting focused on the Research Question and the Process, and involved working in two break-out rooms.

Guiding questions revolved around what participants wanted to find out, how they'd apply their question in their practice, how they would gather data and from whom; and why it's important (including what is the link to well-being). How to keep having fun in the process and sharing inspiration was another important part of the discussions.

OUTCOME: The ARL participants came away from the first check-in reassured with their progress and with a clear structure. The participants also got to hear about everybody else's research questions and context in the same format.

For the facilitators, this meeting was useful to identify who needs support and what kind: artistic or research-oriented.

## Group Check-In, Virtual, November 17 2022

FOCUS: Consolidating the research and preparation for final Research Lab

DESCRIPTION: The second check-in had a reflective and motivational focus. In the beginning of the session, each participant shared how it had been going and lessons learned thus far in the process.

The participants later had a guided meditation session to come back to the basics - think about where in the ARL process they connected with pleasure, what was a failure so far, and what they most appreciated and would want to share back with the group.

The core of the second check-in was a longer deep-dive session, looking at the research process through the lens of criteria used in evaluating programs and policies: *Effectiveness*; *Impact*; *Sustainability*; and *Relevance*.

OUTCOME: The participants left the second check-in with more clarity around what they would bring back to the participants and facilitators in the final Research Lab in Vienna.
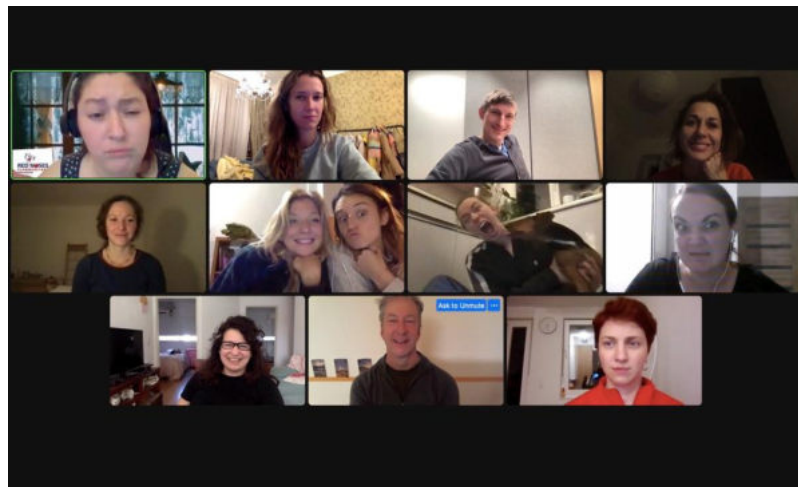
Share Tools and Techniques, Vienna, December 2-3 2022

FOCUS: Giving back

DESCRIPTION: The final Research Lab in Vienna was dedicated entirely to the giving of gifts. The gift was a concept developed in the course of the artistic research lab to signify the output from the research. The participants were free to choose the best format for their gift, so long as they shared something illustrative of their research process and learnings with the whole group. With the exception of one participant that was part of the whole process but could not attend the final Research Lab in Vienna, all participants prepared and shared their gifts. See the section on the Research below, that includes information on what gifts each participant chose to develop.

The timing of the gifts was carefully planned in consultation with the participants to ensure a good flow of the two days dedicated for the final Research Lab. Most importantly, a group reflection section took place after each participant's gift, whereby participants shared inspirations drawn from the gift, asked questions about each other's research process, and suggested support for further development of the question.

At the end of the final session, the participants also discussed the idea behind the final output - this Report - and discussed possibilities for keeping the artistic research lab alive in the future.

OUTCOME: The participants and facilitators received a motivational boost for managing successful closure on the overall Lab the individual Research Questions.

The Action Research Projects

Each of the eleven participants designed and conducted their own applied research project. This section gives a brief overview of the eleven projects. Full descriptions are included in the annex.

Project 1: Recorded Music in Clowning

RESEARCHER	TARGET GROUP	DATA COLLECTION METHODS
Alla Abramova AKA Petka/Betka	Children in hospitals; Seniors in care homes	Reflection with her partner

RESEARCH QUESTION: What does recorded music from a speaker bring to the hospital and care home settings?

ARTISTIC TOOLS: Alla introduced recorded music into visits.

FINDINGS: Alla was free to move and approach people physically, and to dance. Yet, it didn't feel like clowning 100 percent, because the music took away from clowning a bit.

Project 2: The Magic of Being

RESEARCHER	TARGET GROUP	DATA COLLECTION METHODS
Rada Kikelj Drašler AKA Vandra fon Flora	Children in hospitals; Seniors in care homes	Self-observation; observation of partners; post-visit reflections - written and audio recordings; reflections with her partners

RESEARCH QUESTION: What is the magic of being?

ARTISTIC TOOLS: The tools Rada used to reach the portal to a magic encounter included: eye contact, song, movement, presence in the moment, and honesty.

FINDINGS: Attempts to document her thoughts were helpful, even if challenging. The experience "opened her sensors" more to the people she works with and her partner. Even after three years of working together, the exploration of her research question led to some new things happening in her clowning duo.

Project 3: How to Overcome Stage Fright

RESEARCHER	TARGET GROUP	DATA COLLECTION METHODS
L'ubica Šulíková AKA Dr.Bernadeta Spevavá (children) / Jozefína K. Veselá (geriatric)	Children in hospitals; Children in a drama class	Observation; documentation by creating a book with writing and illustrations

RESEARCH QUESTION: How to overcome stage fright?

ARTISTIC TOOLS: L'ubica conducted research in both of her work settings: as a clown working with the Circus Pacientus programme[3] (working in a clown trio) and with a group of six girls in drama class (working alone), with an aim to compare and learn from the experiences of these two groups. With both groups, L'ubica used a mix of exercises she knows from clowning and her other artistic work and games she learned from the artistic research lab.

FINDINGS: The children in hospitals were in an unfamiliar environment, did not know each other, and found it harder to concentrate. They found refuge in repetition and were more anxious to try new things. The theatre group, working in a setting that is usual for them, where both the peers and the teacher were known to them, were able to embrace the exercises with more creativity and got restless with repetition.

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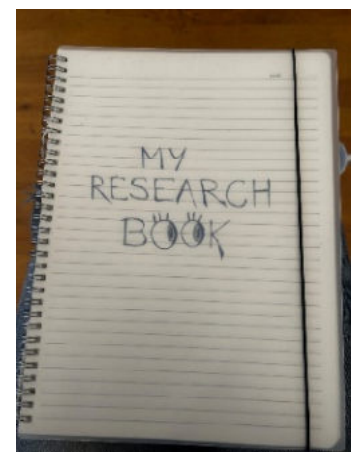
[3] Circus Pacientus is a format used in several countries by RED NOSES partner organisations. It involves three clown doctors with a group of children - often with children in rehabilitation and children with disabilities - over a period of a week. The process involves the institutional community and parents, and ends with a circus performance by the participating children with mentorship and support from the clown trio.

Project 4: Saying YES

RESEARCHER	TARGET GROUP	DATA COLLECTION METHODS
Theresa Scheinecker (Tracy) AKA Wanda Wirbelwind	Artists	Diary; collected feedback from others

RESEARCH QUESTION: What happens when you say YES to yourself?

ARTISTIC TOOLS: Tracy developed and recorded a YES meditation specifically tailored for artists to support their self-acceptance. The meditation was meant to be a starting point for the day or an anxiety producing event, and was a means for people to connect with and accept themselves and their sensations they are experiencing at the time.

FINDINGS: The people Tracy gathered feedback from reported feeling less stress, being more focused and connected. An actress participating in the exercise of Tracy's YES meditation and approach to YES practice felt like someone was taking the weight away from her before a performance. She also discovered that saying NO is even more important than saying YES.

Project 5: Clowning for the Visually Impaired

RESEARCHER	TARGET GROUP	DATA COLLECTION METHODS
Mirta Lučin Žižić AKA Dr. Iskrica	Children in hospitals; Seniors in care homes	Reflection with her partner; Documentation of things that worked or did not work; Ongoing adaptation

RESEARCH QUESTION: How to introduce the art of clowning - a visual form of art - to patients who are visually impaired?

ARTISTIC TOOLS: Mirta explored different exercises with the intention to understand how appropriate they would be for working with visually impaired persons. The exercises drew on clowning and dancing; she applied a similar exercise to the Machine and musical tools (see the Toolbox of Exercises in Annex I).

FINDINGS: When working with the elderly, there is a need for a clearer structure and method to make the performance more intuitive and accessible. Mirta also learned that with musically talented participants, this game was intuitive and the level of improvisation the clown can allow themselves is much higher. Another learning was to not explain the research context to the participants, who were much happier to dive right into the exercise.
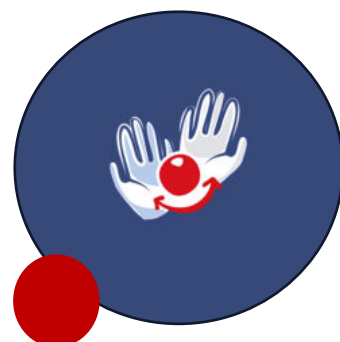
Project 6: Delaying the Use of Words in Clowning

RESEARCHER	TARGET GROUP	DATA COLLECTION METHODS
Scott Witmer AKA Norbert	Children in hospitals; Seniors in care homes	Observing (changes in) behaviour; noticing and quantifying patterns (analysis); developing theory or general results.

RESEARCH QUESTION: How does it affect people in the healthcare setting (and clowning itself) when clowns delay the use of words, potentially using sound, rhythm and movement first?

ARTISTIC TOOLS: Scott applied his research in the course of 13 clown visits. Scott's artistic tools varied, with the focus always on introducing different actions and tools from the artistic clown toolbox rather than starting with words. The tool was, in a sense, to give agency to participants, who get to 'solve' the issues or continue to develop and shape the stimuli/story/game introduced by the clowns.

FINDINGS: The impact the explorations with the gap in clowning had on beneficiaries included (from most to fewest observations attributed):

- Empowerment (42): Empower, stimulate participation and co-creation;
- Emotions (36): Make space for more emotions and connection;
- Curiosity (26): Pique curiosity, create positive tension;
- Abstraction (20): Share the joy of abstraction;
- Sound and movement (18): Change the atmosphere with rhythm, sound and movement;
- Less stress (13): Reduce pressure and stress.

A key learning was that the gap technique is effective for the target group, and the research with the gap had a marked impact on the clowning itself (an unexpected outcome).

Scott found that people living with dementia connect more with structured and logical movements and sounds than with abstract movements and sounds. Problems based in the organic/physical world are more intuitive and people are more likely to try and help the clown when they can relate to the problems they are facing.

Scott and his partners also noticed that their observations following visits evolved from specific to general, as they started noticing trends. Another learning is that clowns (partners) noticed more situations than the observers, who were not experienced in clowning and observation.

Project 7: Co-Creating Interdisciplinary Choreography

RESEARCHER	TARGET GROUP	DATA COLLECTION METHODS
Maria Brigitte Fritz	Women adults in a dance class; Children in a dance class	Self-observation; observation of participants; joint reflection

RESEARCH QUESTION: How can we create a choreography together that fuses humour, well-being, sounds and movement?

ARTISTIC TOOLS: Through a guided journey taking place over a total of seven meetings, Maria guided the participants step-by-step through improvised play involving music, dance and acting. The explorations consolidated into a ritual that both groups would repeat three times in the final practices.

FINDINGS: Given every single participant's input in the joint ritual, an absence of one or another person would result in a different ritual.

Maria observed differences between the children and adult groups. The children take what you give them without giving it too much thought, whereas adults will think about what it means for them, how they feel, what will change from one time to the next.

Project 8: Personal Relationships in Improvisation

RESEARCHER	TARGET GROUP	DATA COLLECTION METHODS
Ligia Libertori AKA Margarita	Artists	Interviews; observation; joint reflection; documentation of findings

RESEARCH QUESTION: Is a personal relationship necessary for finding a moment for multidisciplinary improvisation?

ARTISTIC TOOLS: The context where Ligia applied her ARL research is with six participants in an improvisational Playground - a space for artists from different disciplines to come together and improvise in real time. Ligia had the core participants she worked with as the 'treatment' group and new people that would come in as the 'control' group. The idea behind the comparison is that the new people joining have not yet had the chance to 'break bread' with the other participants, with the hypothesis that without this prior relationship-building, reaching the 'portal' would be harder. Ligia also conducted her experiment 'live' in the final artistic research lab meeting in December, where she invited the lab

participants to cook dinner together, and in the course of the preparations to indulge in small get-to-know-you-better exercises.

FINDINGS: Trust is an important precondition, and this may or may not be related to having established a prior relationship. When comparing the importance of having an informal connection when working with someone in the context of the Playground vs the RED NOSES organisation, Ligia found it was more important in the context of the Playground given it is a place not bound by rules or hierarchies, and thus involved more risk for the participants.

Project 9: Emotional Clarity

RESEARCHER	TARGET GROUP	DATA COLLECTION METHODS
Jolyane Langlois	Artists	Self-observation; Emotional maps

RESEARCH QUESTION: When I'm in a place where I feel safe to express my feelings how does this affect my work?

ARTISTIC TOOLS: Jolyanne is working on a 'Toolbox for emotional care in Artistic Processes' which involves finding ways to recognize, map, draw emotions and deal with them in rehearsal settings to increase the personal well-being of each artist involved, but also the ways of working together. One such tool is a body map where one can indicate and draw emotions in the place where they are most prominent.

FINDINGS: "Emotions are in all disciplines an immense source of creative input – we can use our emotions or those we feel from others to feed into our creative input. If we practice getting in touch with our emotions, it may be easier to attune to the emotions of others. Attunement to what I'm putting into a space and receiving, it's a way to take care of the common space we share. "

Project 10: The Body as a Musical Instrument in Clowning

RESEARCHER	TARGET GROUP	DATA COLLECTION METHODS
Melanie Gemeiner AKA Anna-Bella	Children in hospitals; Seniors in care homes	Self-observation; Verbal reflection with partners

RESEARCH QUESTIONS: What happens if I let people's eye movements lead my clown's movements? What happens when my clown consciously introduces breath to her practice?

ARTISTIC TOOLS: In the course of her research Melanie 'tried on' two research questions. One involved letting people's eye movements lead her own movements. While it turned out difficult and not always intuitive for the viewers to understand this new 'power' granted to them, this exploration also uncovered new ways of clowning for her and her partners - e.g. they started exploring their bodies as musical instruments. In the evolved research question, Melanie focused entirely on introducing breath - its absence, its abundance, its overtness, covertness - into her healthcare clowning work.

FINDINGS: Melanie's exploration with her original research question provided insights, e.g. that a change in the clowning practice should be accessible to both the clown and the audience for it to work. The initial idea of being 'driven' by eye movements of the clients was not sufficiently intuitive for either the people being visited nor the clowns themselves.

Breathing on the other hand is something that instantly connects people in a given space. Melanie found breathing therapeutic to all involved. Playing with breath was an intuitive tool to fall back on for the clown and easy to connect to for both children and elderly. Particularly the relaxation and release provided by breath proved very powerful with beneficiaries - in hospital visits, the act of breathing with people in pain on more than one occasion provided relief to the point of tears.

Project 11: Embracing Failure

RESEARCHER	TARGET GROUP	DATA COLLECTION METHODS
Elda Gallo	Artists	"Failure inventories" collected in writing and verbally

RESEARCH QUESTION: What happens when you embrace failure?

ARTISTIC TOOLS: Inspired by the clowns feeding on mistakes rather than being discouraged by them, Elda explored mistakes in rehearsal settings, soon to find that choreographers will be prone to correcting them as an imperfection in a planned choreography. Recognizing the need for self-care in the stressful and fast-paced dance performer's reality, Elda developed a 'failure inventory' that was sometimes shared verbally, other times in writing. The artists performing in the rehearsal would share what would spell failure for them in the beginning of the day, and consider whether this is connected to some more general fear they have. Other people would then add to the failure inventory what they can personally do to welcome and make this failure less scary. The loop would close with a reflection of how going through this process changed the overall working experience.

FINDINGS: Data gathered from participants in the rehearsals where Elda explored her research question shows they felt more comfortable, more relaxed and open, supported by others but also connected and attentive to their needs. The written and the verbal approaches were both useful, but in different ways. The written approach was much safer but also less emotional. Vocalizing fears makes them small, and makes it possible to be more present and less serious.

The Impact

The artistic research lab had an impact at several levels: for target groups, for the lab participants, and for RED NOSES International.

Impact on Target Groups

The impact on target groups occurred during the individual research component of the ARL, in which each participant explored a research question within their own practice. Therefore, the impact was different for each unique context. Details are elaborated in the research descriptions above and in the annex.

Some common findings for target groups, as reported by the participants, included:

- More open and safe, less fear
- More empowerment
- More relaxation, release and calm, less stress
- More smiles and laughter
- More opportunities for connection

Participants had different methods of data collection to substantiate these findings. Overall, it appears that the processes undertaken during the action research benefited vulnerable groups with a range of the positive outcomes associated with healthcare clowning.

Impact on Lab Participants

In the final survey, participants had an opportunity to reflect on what they got out of the artistic research lab as a whole. A few themes were emphasized by multiple participants:

- learned research skills

- gained new ideas and exercises

- developed artistic skills

The artistic research lab aimed to help participants develop their reflection and research skills, and most participants report that this indeed happened. The lab provided participants with new "tools for thinking and talking about my art and practice with colleagues and others" and helped them learn how to "investigate something on a social level." Another discovery was that "sometimes being simply aware of a CHANGE in the practice (even if it might just lead to trial and error or a back to zero kind of process) is very welcome and helpful."

Participants also reported that they gained new ideas and exercises from the lab. For example, participants with a movement background were inspired by the idea of failure as artistic potential, and explored how they might apply that in their own contexts. Several participants reported new understanding about how to unravel ableism, recognizing different potentials of different bodies, and questioning how healthcare clowning can become more accessible, for example for visually impaired people. The interdisciplinary perspective in particular raised participants' consciousness about different opportunities and perspectives. Several participants reported wanting more time to dive more deeply into different disciplines, particularly music.

Throughout the lab, participants also had the chance to develop their artistic skills, such as using the voice more freely, and acquiring new musical tools. The lab also helped participants gain "more courage to try out new things and ways of expression."

Impact on RED NOSES International

At the institutional level, the artistic research lab opened up possibilities for the future. Most commonly mentioned in the final survey were the exchanges and connections made during the lab. Shared interests were established, and participants expressed the interest to continue working and exploring together in the future.

In the "Recommendations" section, further themes are elaborated that emerged as learnings which RED NOSES has the opportunity to continue to develop.

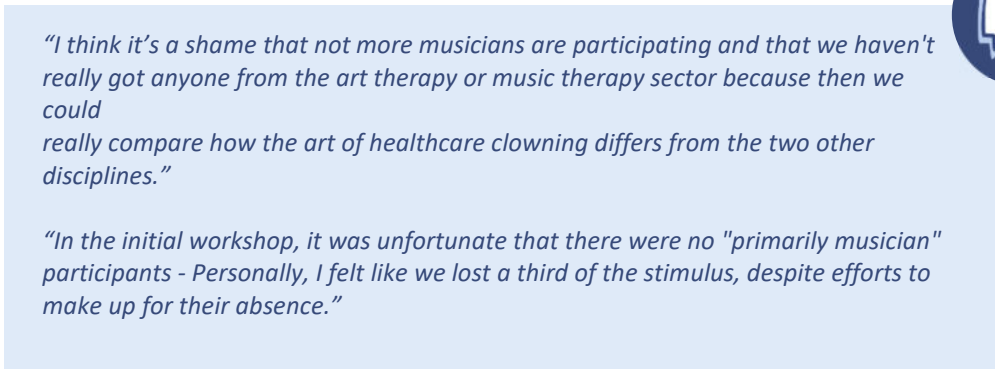# Learnings for Future Artistic Research Labs

The artistic research lab was a pilot programme with little relevant previous experience to draw on for facilitators and participants alike. A key learning from this was that it works! The lab was a hugely rewarding experience for all involved, and has served as a source of inspiration, learning, raising and answering questions, becoming better people and making friends.

Throughout the artistic research lab, facilitators took care to collect feedback on both the process and the outcomes. In addition to reflection sessions in each live and virtual event, feedback gathered during one-on-one mentoring sessions, the research facilitator also ran two participant surveys - one shortly after the first Research Lab in Vienna in October, and one after the end of the final meeting in December. This learning section is informed by the surveys and feedback from participants and facilitators.
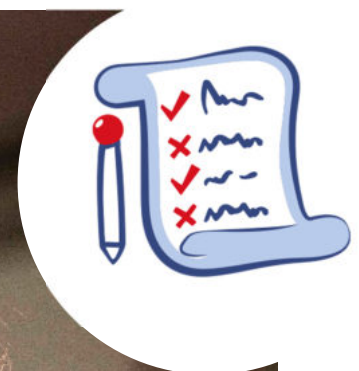
Recruitment of Participants

The recruitment of participants for the artistic research lab was decentralized, with RED NOSES communicating the opportunity to healthcare clowns, Katherina Senk to movers, and JAM Music University to musicians. However, no participants came specifically as representatives of the music world. While an invitation for musicians to participate in the lab was made public for JAM Music Lab students, the announcement did not clearly communicate the extent of commitment needed, nor included a selection process, which resulted in no music students participating. Music as a discipline and its impact on wellbeing was thus less explored in the course of the lab compared to the other disciplines. The insufficient possibility to delve into music for the people representing different disciplines was among the things participants noted as needing improvement, should the lab continue in some form.

> *"I think it's a shame that not more musicians are participating and that we haven't really got anyone from the art therapy or music therapy sector because then we could*
> *really compare how the art of healthcare clowning differs from the two other disciplines."*
>
> *"In the initial workshop, it was unfortunate that there were no "primarily musician" participants - Personally, I felt like we lost a third of the stimulus, despite efforts to make up for their absence."*

→ There needs to be oversight by one coordinator of the process for identifying relevant participants and ensuring their participation in the full process.

→ The communication about the artistic research lab ahead of its starting could already have been centralised, with one contact person for all participants.

→ An initial online meeting could be held before the first in-person lab, to be able to confirm first-hand the level of commitment in the group.

→ Even with no musicians participating as participants, the meetings after the initial Research Lab in Vienna in October could have included activities and information grounded in music, especially with a link to wellbeing.

Selection of Research Questions

Each participant was expected to come up with a question and methodology that they could pursue in their own practice. The need for everyone to find a worthy question to research was a source of stress for several participants.

→ The participants could have used more preparatory work by the facilitators to identify areas interesting to research and possibly share pre-identified questions to help jog people's imaginations.

→ While an open approach allowing participants to choose their research focus was appreciated overall, the experience with how much uncertainty this produced shows that people could do with more of a frame and restrictions.

→ The facilitators could have further done an initial grouping of people with similar research interests, and facilitated 'group research projects'.

→ At the individual level, participants reflected that they personally should have asked themselves more direct questions for the benefit of the research, communicated more with others, and documented their data more.

Structure of the Lab

Participants had several suggestions for how the design and facilitation of the lab could be improved.

→ A longer research phase would be warranted. Two months for developing a full individualised research was a challenging time-frame, especially for people with little previous experience with research.

→ Participants felt the virtual check-ins between the two live Research Labs were too short, and there could have been three in place of two. Some participants further felt that one more live meeting in preparation for the final Research Lab could have been useful.

→ Some participants felt the time during virtual check-ins could have been better spent by focusing on challenges and obstacles as opposed to gathering the status quo in relation to everyone's research process, which could have been done one-on-one ahead of the meeting.

→ Participants grew really close and cared to know about everyone else's process and to support them with it. The fact that some parts of our check-ins were done in breakout rooms meant that in some meetings, some participants did not get to hear from each other.

→ A few participants felt participation in the ARL - a voluntary undertaking for participants - should be financially rewarded, and participants given more responsibility including for dissemination in their countries of origin.

→ Communication ahead of the lab should be clearer on its design, expectations around the process, and outputs.

Recommendations

Continue Supporting Artistic Research

The artistic research lab should live on! The data gathered for this report shows this rather short experience had a positive impact on the overall motivation of participants and facilitators as artists and people supporting art for well-being. It also supported participants' own well-being and led to positive impact for the target groups participants worked with. The lab also made a case for more research-led development of artistic interventions.

RED NOSES International should continue developing research capacity not only at the umbrella level but also with the member organisations, within the sector overall, and by individual healthcare clowns. All of the participants that responded to the final survey (7 of 11) supported the idea of a follow-up meeting, even if virtually, in 2023.

"To have a next Meeting, continue working, exchanging! Don't Lose Touch."
"We could continue our research and meet again regularly".

Keep the Research Momentum

Among key outcomes of the artistic research lab is the clarity it helped many participants reach about areas they want to continue exploring. The research questions that materialised can be grouped according to many different aspects, and with little facilitation or structure, participants could continue supporting each other in their continued exploration. The artistic research lab extension could take the form of communities of research around these or other questions that would evolve from participants grouping themselves based on commonalities they experienced in their research interest.

Some potential categories of questions that emerged are presented below.

- **Formats for sharing/embodying emotions to promote well-being for performers** - especially the movers in the group focused considerably on well-being in the performing arts sector. A

healthcare clown also explored the utility of relaxation and clowning exercises with children to build up their confidence to perform before an audience.

- **What's behind the magic of the encounter** - two healthcare clowns explored what 'conditions' help reach the magic/portal to a real connection with someone. Somewhat relatedly, one healthcare clown started exploring what tools the clown has to reach a connection with persons with visual impairments.

- **What changes in healthcare clowning when you breathe/take a moment** - two healthcare clowns explored the effects of introducing breath/ a gap in their clowning with the target groups.

- **How does using recorded music affect the clown and their work with the target groups** - one participating clown experimented with the use of a boombox with recorded music and the additional physicality made possible by not holding an instrument in hospital and care home settings.

> *"I would like for it to continue so I can deepen my research".*
>
> *"At the last meeting, some of the topics seemed to suddenly take on common contours and were connected by something. Maybe this is the way - to combine similar topics and see what happens…"*

Continue Interdisciplinary Exploration

The artistic research lab design was especially successful for being interdisciplinary and linking everything with research. Music, music therapy and even visual and sensory arts and their therapeutic effects could further enrich the research, particularly thinking of beneficiaries who are persons with unique needs. Whether a continuation of the current lab, or in the form of a new group taking part in a new artistic research lab, more disciplines should be represented for increased benefit.

Connect to Other RED NOSES Initiatives

Innovation Fund

For RED NOSES International, the artistic research lab fits well with different ongoing initiatives, and its continuation could be designed to have more synergies with these. The artistic research lab can serve as a stepping stone for artists thinking to apply for funding to the Innovation Fund. The Innovation Fund is a RED NOSES International funding scheme supporting pilot formats for work with different target groups developed by healthcare clowns with support from member

organisations. Artistic research experiences can prepare individual clowns to think about the possibility of researching and developing new formats.

International School of Humour

Likewise, the artistic research lab has shown that healthcare clowns and other artists are interested to learn more about structured reflection on their art form and the impact it has on the target groups. RED NOSES International should consider including a module on research in its International School of Humour curriculum for healthcare clowns.

Other Projects

Finally, the artistic research lab has potential synergies with special projects RED NOSES International is involved in, as e.g. the ClowNexus project (https://clownexus.eu). In ClowNexus, two groups of healthcare clowns with support to sector leaders are researching promising approaches and co-creation when working with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and persons with Dementia. All research, from clown-led to scientific studies undertaken by RED NOSES International in collaboration with other institutions and researchers, are linked by similar questions, approaches, challenges and opportunities that merit more exploration.
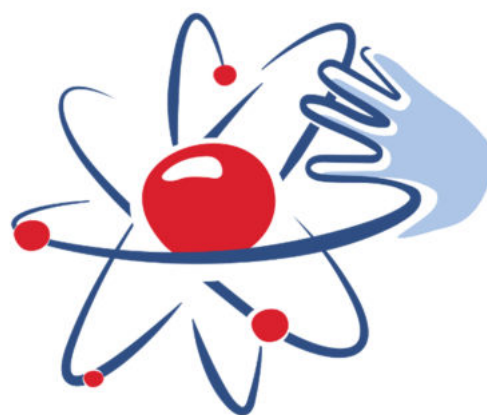
Support More Institutional and Individual Ownership

Any initiative as the artistic research lab is effort-intensive both from the design/facilitation and the participation side. To support sustainability, the artistic research lab could become something supported by artistic and research institutions and individual artists and researchers that stand to benefit from the processes and results that emerge. At the level of the RED NOSES network, member organisations could have a role in facilitating continued research processes at the country/regional level, tapping into the participants' experience and exploring their interest in leading research groups of their own, with their time compensated as working hours in the given organisation.

"I would like to present my results to my team, to my artistic leadership and to the research departments in my organization. I would like to have conversations about how performance research can be applied more systematically in my organization. I would like to participate in and lead further such research labs, in thus or in other constellations."

Use the Knowledge of Participants

The participants in this artistic research lab were highly experienced and had a lot they could bring to the other participants about their own art form and experiences. Transferring the possibility to share knowledge and experience to the participants could further motivate everyone and further experience themselves more in the role as facilitators of learning.
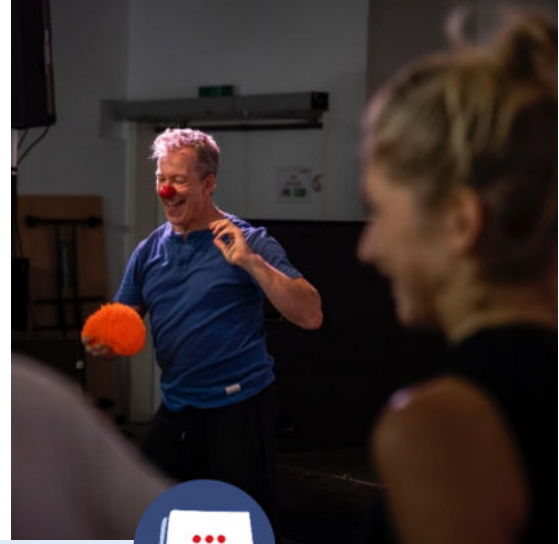
"It would be amazing with so much knowledge and wisdom among the participants, we could generate a bigger exchange. For that we'd probably need more time and a salary to not have to choose between paid work and the research. Various possible collaborations between the participants are in the ear, and various points we could work between the different organisations involved".
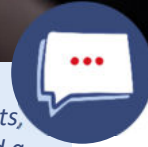
Research Collaboration Inspires Artistic Collaboration

While the ARL had a clear link to research and to well-being, it nonetheless brought together artists who live and create on inspiration. Many came away with a desire to do something together, also and possibly more purely artistic.

"I would love to meet and exchange and figure out how to stay connected - I would also really love to work on an artistic outcome (like a performance)".

Spread the Word

This report is one step towards disseminating the inspiration and learning that emerged from the artistic research lab. Yet it has its limitations, not least being written in English and not accessible to individuals not speaking the language. Other formats, such as a podcast for individual participants to showcase their experiences, or a scientific publication, should be explored.

The dissemination effort should first and foremost be informed by the intended result - whether for inspiring individual artists to pursue research (Facebook posts; this report; country/region-level workshops) or to raise funding for more research-led exploration on the impact of art on target groups (scientific publications, sector-level workshops; lectures in conferences).

Annex 1: The Research Projects

Full descriptions of the research projects from the Artistic Research Lab

Project 1: Alla Abramova - AKA Petka/Betka

Research question: What does music bring to the hospital and care home settings?

CONTEXT: Alla is an experienced artist - traditional and street theatre actress hailing from Ukraine and working as a clown doctor for RDEČI NOSKI in Slovenia. As someone constantly engaging in professional development, Alla joined the ARL to continue her journey of explorations with physical theatre and movement which she finds very impactful, particularly when working with older people and refugees. Alla did her research in a duo with another clown, trying out her research question only when they were going on visits together. Her research took place in both hospitals with children and youth and in care homes. Even if she was visiting specific people in both settings, she would play the music already in the waiting room (hospital settings) and common room (care homes), engaging other patients and staff on her journey to the intended beneficiaries.

ARTISTIC TOOLS: Alla experimented with what is seen as taboo for many clowns - incorporating into her clowning a speaker and recorded music. She used music as a connector to memory, and by virtue of using a speaker she freed up her body for more movement, experimenting with dance. In terms of format, she worked differently with the hospitals and care homes. In hospitals, she'd engage the children in helping her make a choreography for her dance, which she'd spend the visit perfecting with the kids' help. In long-term care homes, she'd play older songs the listeners might relate to (matching their interests is a big goal for the duo in this format) and take a moment to feel the music with the elderly, inviting those willing to share a dance. The overall structure/format was fixed, and they'd improvise around its implementation. She'd use her prepared playlist flexibly in her clowning - sometimes keeping one song on a loop, other times playing the whole playlist, taking requests, etc.

METHOD FOR DATA COLLECTION: Alla chose to apply her research question with the same partner, whom she informed about her research, involving them in reflections about the research question. Alla's reflection revolved around both the impact on the beneficiaries and that on her clown.

IMPACT ON HERSELF & PARTNERS: when clowning with recorded music (compared against for example an instrument like ukulele, which one has to hold and can act like a barrier between the clown and a person they're engaging), Alla was free to move and approach people physically, and to dance. The clowning didn't feel very different with children, but it was different with the elderly - music made it more private. Overall, her clown likes full attention and the music becomes something more important than the clown's presence, so she's not sure the clown likes that. The research then becomes on her clown - how her clown can find a way to be with the music more.

IMPACT ON BENEFICIARIES: People change immediately when music is involved - it makes people dance, and if it's music that people like (matching interests from nurses, doctors) - it's a strong connector for all involved. People start to talk differently, smile, laugh.

LEARNINGS: Using the format she created, with music, it didn't feel like clowning 100 percent, because the music took away from clowning a bit.

THE GIFT: In the final meeting of the lab, Alla performed both formats - the one she used with children and the one with care staff.

Project 2: Rada Kikelj Drašler AKA Vandra fon Flora

Research question: What is the magic of being?

CONTEXT: Rada is an artist - poet, multimedia creator, street and traditional theatre actress and has been working with RDEČI NOSKI in Slovenia as a clown doctor since 2019. She joined the ARL to continue her exploration of using different disciplines including music and dance in her work as a clown for increased therapeutic effect. Rada is also interested in how to be more present in healthcare work. Related with her interests, Rada explored the magic of being during her visits to children in hospitals and seniors in care homes. She reflected on her research in visits with different partners she worked with at the time. Her partners sometimes knew about her research, though most often she'd share with them after the visits.

ARTISTIC TOOLS: Rada's artistic approach to exploring the magic of being was through full presence in the moment with the duo partner and with the people she was visiting. The tools or keys Rada explored to reach the portal to a magic encounter with each person she worked with included: eye contact, song, movement, presence in the moment and honesty. To find the keys, Rada works with her sensors - sees what's there and works with it. She'd make games like

using the natural sounds in the environment (hospitals) or trying to illustrate the energy in the room through sound and movement.

> *"If I just try to follow the energy, it's not always good, it's often very low in the rooms (elderly). I need to add something and then transformation happens. The key to open this magical space are the eyes. I feel so connected with the person, so much you can share/communicate through the eyes - pain, joy, really strong connection. Magic for me is to feel eternity - unending space, it gives you so many opportunities."*

METHOD FOR DATA COLLECTION: Rada did self-observation of her and her partners' performances, and documented what she noticed in writing as well as a series of post-visit audio recordings. While initially, her partners did not know about Rada's research, she started sharing her question and observations, and in the later visits also harvested data from reflections by her partner clowns.

IMPACT ON HERSELF AND PARTNER(S): As an experienced and sensitive clown, Rada has been reflecting on questions like this one throughout her practice. With the experience of the ARL, Rada has become even more aware. As she put it, the experience opened her sensors more to the people she works with and her partner. For Rada, being more conscious of the importance of people trusting and opening their hearts to her, and managing to press the button to the magic between them, builds her confidence. A partner she worked with said they felt a nice fluid energy in the visits, felt safe, and this openness and trust that whatever they'll do will be accepted. Even after three years of working together, the exploration of her research question led to some new things happening with this duo.

IMPACT ON OTHERS: For Rada, when you try to feel the person who is with you and develop a game from this - it can be a transformative and therapeutic and sometimes even cathartic experience. Rada felt that the visits where the portal to the magic of being happened were impactful on all participants - they were connective and emotional, and she got a lot of feedback and appreciation.

> *"I'm like a mushroom, a sponge, having the power to trust them that I can transform this energy through the art."*

LEARNINGS: Working often with different partners, Rada often didn't have enough time to talk to the partners on a given visit about her research. A learning in this process has been that it is important to talk with the partner about the explorations one is doing because recognizing the magic in a given encounter to a large extent depends on awareness and conscious searching for the right keys to this moment. Another learning is connected to even small attempts to document her thoughts is helpful, even if challenging.

THE GIFT: Rada could not attend the gift giving session and instead offers an insight into her exploration of the magic of being through sharing some pictures from her visits.

Project 3: L'ubica Šulíková AKA Dr.Bernadeta Spevavá (children) / Jozefína K. Veselá (geriatric)

Research question: How to overcome stage fright?

CONTEXT: L'ubica is an experienced clown doctor working with ČERVENÝ NOS in Slovakia since 2012, and a teacher of singing and drama in an art school from 2008. She joined the ARL to continue her explorations of using voice and body language with a view to apply her experiences for teaching and working with students. L'ubica chose stage fright as a topic that resonates with her driven by her own experience growing up and participating in performances before an audience and overcoming stage fright with support from her teacher. Working as a clown and a teacher of drama, L'ubica discovered how powerful the clown tools and philosophy can be to liberate people from this type of anxiety. L'ubica applied her Artistic Research Lab research in both of her work settings:

as a clown working with the Circus Pacientus programme[4] (working in a clown trio) and with a group of six girls in drama class (working alone), with an aim also to compare and learn from the experiences of these two groups.

ARTISTIC TOOLS: In her work in the two settings, L'ubica used a mix of exercises she knows from clowning and her other artistic work and games she experienced in the ARL labs. She used various concentration and relaxation exercises including: Whish, Spoing, Zap; Throw and Catch; My Partner is a Genius; A Guided Journey; the Secret Circle and others (see a description of the exercises in the Toolbox of Exercises in Annex I). With Circus Pacientus (Circus BUBO) - the clowns invited the children in a Paedopsychiatry ward to explore sensations with different substances and toys and also used the different games, and sang karaoke of the Bohemian Rhapsody. As part of the format, the participating kids had to perform for an audience on the fifth day, so a big part of the approach was using relaxation, playfulness with mistakes and other techniques to prepare everyone to enjoy their time onstage.

METHOD FOR DATA COLLECTION: L'ubica applied different methods for data collection with the participating children, but also more broadly with different performing artists to learn more about people's experiences with stage fright and what helps them overcome it. L'ubica observed the participants and studiously documented her research with both groups and even summarised main findings per group including what aspects were important in relation to stage fright. For example, she found the group in Circus BUBO was in an unfamiliar environment, did not know each other, and found it harder to concentrate, found refuge in repetition and were more anxious to try new things, focused a lot on the verbal instructions, struggled with motor skills; however, with the challenges they encountered, successful participation in the end performance made a tremendous impact. The theatre group, working in a setting that is usual for them, where both the peers and the teacher were known to them, were able to embrace the exercises with more creativity and would get restless with repetition.

IMPACT ON HERSELF AND PARTNER(S): In addition to noticing different dynamics when approaching the question of stage fright in a nurturing clown way and researching what works, when and why, L'ubica also observed changes in herself. With the ARL, L'ubica developed her skills to observe, reflect and document her practice.

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[4] Circus Pacientus is a format used in several countries by RED NOSES partner organisations. It involves three clown doctors with a group of children - often with children in rehabilitation and children with disabilities - over a period of a week. The process involves the institutional community and parents, and ends with a circus performance by the participating children with mentorship and support from the clown trio.

IMPACT ON BENEFICIARIES: L'ubica was able to separate out the impact she saw on the two different groups. With children in the drama class, she observed the utility of the different exercises to help them feel more at ease with performing, and will continue to use different dynamics to continue working on stage fright. In the words of L'ubica, for the Circus BUBO group:

"For some of them, the final performance is such a powerful and positive experience, that they remember it forever and even improve their current state of health".

LEARNINGS: For L'ubica, a learning from the ARL was how to observe herself and document changes she experiences herself and with the groups she's working with.

THE GIFT: L'ubica invited the ARL participants to experience some of the exercises she applied in her two settings, including the ever-so-passionate karaoke of the Bohemian Rhapsody. L'ubica also shared with us her hand-written and illustrated book illustrating her experience with this research.
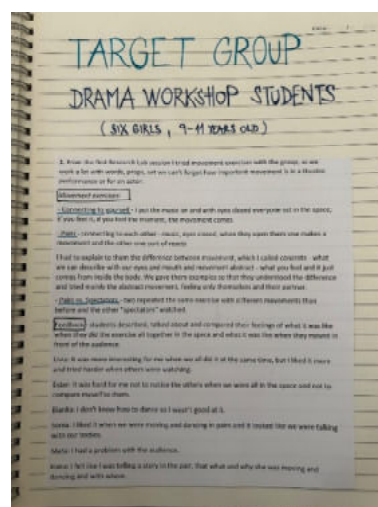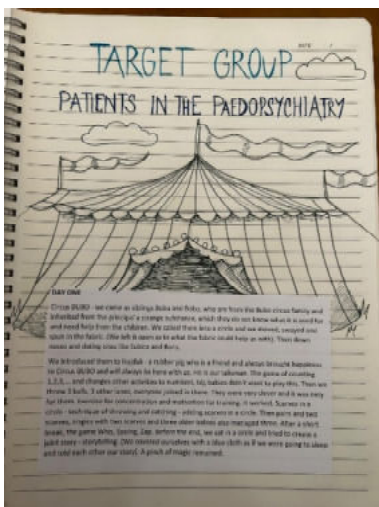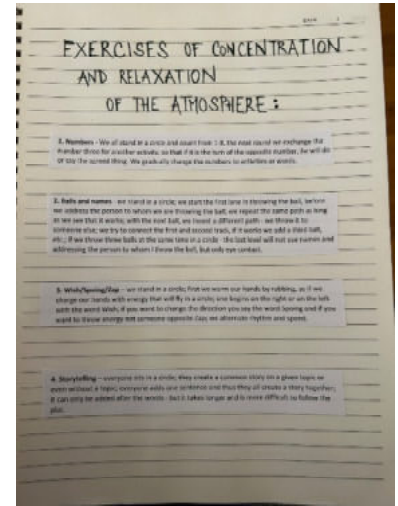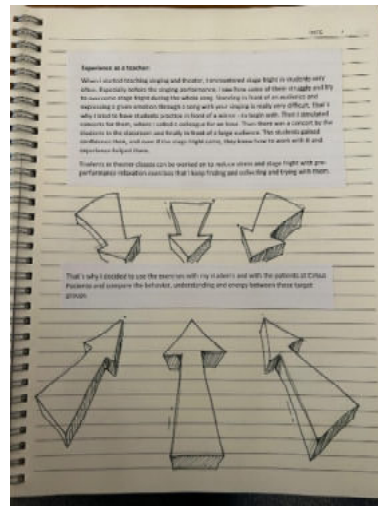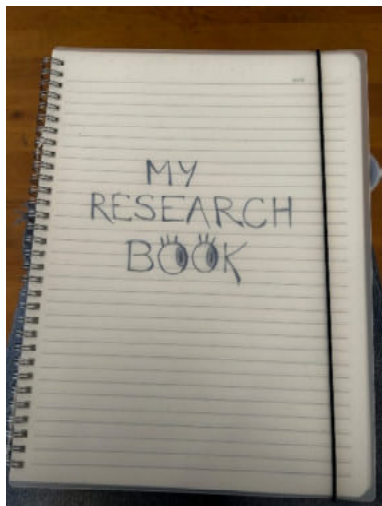
Project 4: Theresa Scheinecker (Tracy) AKA Wanda Wirbelwind

Research question: What happens when you say YES to yourself?

CONTEXT: Tracy is a professional mover, psychologist and baby clown introduced to the world of clowning in 2021. Through the ARL, Tracy came to explore self-love through YES practice, with the aim to then transform her personal experience into something she can share with others. Tracy developed a YES meditation that she would listen to before performances as a self-nurturing moment to remember to say yes and accept herself and everything that is to come in the performance.

ARTISTIC TOOLS: Tracy developed and pre-recorded a (really really lovely!) YES meditation specifically tailored for artists to support their self-acceptance. The meditation is meant to be a starting point for the day or an anxiety producing event, and is a means for people to connect with and accept themselves and the sensations they are experiencing at the time. It is also a reminder to continue accepting oneself for the duration of the day. The three pillars of her approach were - Yes; Living in the Moment; and Acceptance.

METHOD FOR DATA COLLECTION: Tracy kept a diary to document her own experience and collected feedback from three people in the ARL and an actress.

IMPACT ON HERSELF: YES practice developed into a habit to - in the course of the day - identifying and acting on opportunities for YES, and looking forward to writing reflections at the end of the day. Identified opportunities for YES resulted in little missions for herself - calling her brother or cleaning the windows, which would then transition into things that felt good. Tracy also explored accepting bad things that would happen or bad days as something that happens and that should not take away from the focus on self-care.

IMPACT ON BENEFICIARIES: The people Tracy gathered feedback from reported feeling less stress, being more focused and connected. An actress participating in the exercise of Tracy's YES meditation and approach to YES practice felt like someone was taking the weight away from her before a performance. All ARL participants got to experience Tracy's YES meditation, and the feedback was overwhelmingly encouraging, including a request to start the second day of the Lab with YES meditation.

LEARNINGS: A reflection on saying NO and saying YES - saying NO is more important.

THE GIFT: In our final session of gift sharing, Tracy shared with the participants her YES meditation.

Project 5: Mirta Lučin Žižić AKA Dr. Iskrica

Research question: How to introduce the art of clowning - a visual form of art - to patients who are visually impaired?

CONTEXT: Mirta is a professional dancer, including aerial and fire dancing, teacher, art critic, street theatre performer and a clown working for CRVENI NOSOVI in Croatia's Dalmatia region, where she is also the regional coordinator. Someone who explored her own relationship with the world through dance, Mirta has been enjoying employing dance in her work with children with disabilities. She joined the ARL to continue exploring the therapeutic effect of dance on people as a medium that provides guidance, relief and release. Mirta worked with a duo partner who was both a participant and observer of the encounters where she reflected on techniques that would work with visually impaired persons, even if in the course of the visits during the ARL she did not directly work with this group. Her visits with a focus on the research question were to children in hospital wards (which also sparked an interest on approaches to working with persons who have limited mobility) and elderly in care homes.

ARTISTIC TOOLS: In the visits where Mirta reflected on this research question, with her partner, she explored different exercises with the intention to understand how appropriate they would be for working with visually impaired persons. The exercises drew on clowning and dancing, she applied a similar exercise to the Machine and musical tools (see the Toolbox of Exercises in Annex I). Mirta explored the clown on the META level. She was using her clown as an instrument that observes itself and sounds out its different movements, producing a melody.

METHOD FOR DATA COLLECTION: Mirta's data collection consisted of informing her partner of the intention of the research and having them support her own reflections through their inputs as well. She documented particularly the things that worked or did not work with either children or elderly persons and adapting as she went.

IMPACT ON HERSELF AND PARTNER(S): Through exploring more music in her clowning practice with vulnerable groups, Mirta is recuperating her own sometimes uneasy relationship with this medium. She has the skills and is working to build the confidence to use sound more in her work and develop tools and methods that can then also surpass limitations some people have of registering visual

cues. The ARL research gave Mirta more freedom to improvise with voice and her go-to medium - dance, and as a next step she plans to take this exploration directly to work with visually impaired persons.

IMPACT ON BENEFICIARIES: The visits by Mirta and her partner were very playful and particularly with children she found many connecting points given the universality of rhythm as a language that binds us all. Her explorations with sound and the freedom to experiment more with dance resulted in some really enjoyable experiences.

LEARNINGS: When working with the elderly, there is a need for a clearer structure and method to make this meta-level performance more intuitive and accessible. Mirta also learned that with musically talented participants, e.g. a child she visited in a surgical ward - this game was intuitive and the level of improvisation the clown can allow themselves is much higher then. Another learning was to not bother presenting the research story to the participants, who are much happier to oblige as conductors for musicians running late for a show.

THE GIFT: In the final ARL Lab in December 2022, Mirta verbally shared her experience with the research and explorations she underwent with her question, sharing some stories along the way. Her question generated a lot of interest among the lab participants, as something that resonated - persons with visual impairments are a common group both among children with disabilities and elderly persons visited by clown doctors, however there is little in terms of professional training specifically on approaches to work with this group. The reflection session afterwards ended in a call to action to share in developing relevant methods.

Project 6: Scott Witmer AKA Norbert

*A special **THANK YOU** goes out to Scott for his support in the first and most intensive Artistic Research Lab meeting in October in Vienna, where he stepped in as co-director and facilitated numerous sessions involving clown games and sharing techniques like Appreciative Inquiry.*

Research question: How does it affect people in the healthcare setting (and clowning itself) when clowns delay the use of words, potentially using sound, rhythm and movement first?

Scott also considered the meta-level questions of how field research by clowns can help us understand the impact of healthcare clowning, and the strengths and weaknesses of his method

CONTEXT: Scott Witmer is an experienced healthcare clown working since 2011 with ROTE NASEN Clowndoctors in Vienna, where he also worked as Regional Artistic Director (2019-21) and Mentor (2022-23). Scott was driven to the ARL by his curiosity to keep exploring the magic of the present moment and sharing and to explore - through research - the therapeutic effects of music, dance and clowning on communities and people. As a mentor and person supporting artistic development of his peers, Scott is also driven to hone his skills to reflect on, share his learning and facilitate the learning of others. Scott applied his research in the course of 13 clown visits to four primarily pediatric wards and six visits in two geriatric care facilities. The visits included a mix of Scott performing solo (1x), duo (8x) and duo + observer (4x).

ARTISTIC TOOLS: Scott's artistic tools varied, with the focus always on introducing different actions and tools from the artistic clown toolbox rather than starting with words. The tool was, in a sense, to give agency to participants, who get to 'solve' the issues or continue to develop and shape the stimuli/story/game introduced by the clowns.

METHOD FOR DATA COLLECTION: (adapted from Scott's ARL Final Report) Scott adopted a behavioural research focus - observing (changes in) behaviour of patients, their families, residents of senior facilities, staff, clown artist partners and himself. His research was exploratory and adopted an inductive research approach, involving gathering data with a specific focus, noticing patterns (analysis), and developing theory or general results. Scott collected data himself, from seven different partners, and from four observations by three RNA employees. Scott introduced the research question to his partners and secured their commitment to provide him verbal feedback on a set of predetermined questions post-visit, resulting in a total of 87 observations (1-2 per room).

IMPACT ON HIMSELF AND PARTNER(S): The well-structured and thought-out learning process was a comfortable and very positive experience for the participating clowns, observers and Scott himself. Scott's clown partners have commented that Scott's visits since the explorations of the ARL began have been different, and that their research has changed the way they are clowning together. Scott and his clown partners also observed that applying the gap/delay technique impacted their clowning in six main ways: it encouraged physicality, it helped simplify and slow things down, it created more space for positive misunderstandings, clown problems, and creativity between the clowns, it helped open the physical space, it helped them use fewer, more precise words, and it increased the frequency and intensity of their eye contact with each other and with beneficiaries.

IMPACT ON BENEFICIARIES: The impact the explorations with the gap in clowning had on beneficiaries included (from most to fewest observations attributed):

- Empowerment (42): Empower, stimulate participation and co-creation;

- Emotions (36): Make space for more emotions and connection;

- Curiosity (26): Pique curiosity, create positive tension;

- Abstraction (20): Share the joy of abstraction;

- Sound and movement (18): Change the atmosphere with rhythm, sound and movement;

- Less stress (13): Reduce pressure and stress.

LEARNINGS: The meticulous process Scott applied in his research produced numerous learnings. He and his partners noticed that their observations following visits evolved from specific to general, as they started noticing trends. Another learning is that clowns (partners) noticed more situations than the observers, who were not experienced in clowning and observation. Some learnings came from using the gap by the clown – especially people living with dementia connect more with structured and logical movements and sounds than with abstract movements and sounds, problems based in the organic/physical world are more intuitive and people are more likely to try and help the clown when they can relate to the problems they are facing. A key learning was that the gap technique is effective for the target group, and the research with the gap had a marked impact on the clowning itself (an unexpected outcome).

THE GIFT: Scott produced a complete Final Report summarising his research approach and results. In the Final ARL Lab in December, Scott prepared 'stations' where he shared information about different aspects of his research - including visual prompts and a verbal presentation. A long reflection section followed, with other ARL participants really appreciative of Scott's dynamic and scientific approach to this process.

Project 7: Maria Brigitte Fritz

Research question: How can we - participants in my dance classes - women adults - create a choreography together that fuses humour, well-being, sounds and movement?

CONTEXT: Maria has a background in Medicine and Political Sciences. For the past few years, Maria has pursued learning and professional opportunities in applying artistic disciplines - performing and visual arts - for wellbeing. She joined the ARL representing dance/movement among the disciplines involved to further explore the therapeutic effects of art. She currently teaches dance to groups of children and adult women. Furthermore, she teaches and applies relaxation techniques. It was in the context of these two different engagements that Maria explored her research question.

ARTISTIC TOOLS: Maria explored different interdisciplinary tools with her adult women and children groups. Through a guided journey taking place over a total of seven meetings, Maria guided the participants step-by-step through improvised play involving music, dance and acting. She initially played music for the participants inviting them to find a movement. The clowning practice in the ARL inspired her to fuse music, movement and humour, so she invited everyone to find their animal and an accompanying sound. This approach was different to choreographing the content of the workshops. Further, the repetition of the same improvisation technique provided an anchor that allowed participants to safely join and co-create the practice. The explorations consolidated into a ritual that both groups would repeat three times in the final practices.

METHOD FOR DATA COLLECTION: Maria applied self-observation and observation of the participants and joint reflection as the method for collecting data on her question.

IMPACT ON HERSELF/CLOWNING: Maria enjoyed the ARL and finding inspiration to take her practice as facilitator in movement further. The ARL process led Maria to more self-reflection in practice, enriching the teaching method itself.

IMPACT ON BENEFICIARIES: The main outcome for participants was increased empowerment through the possibility to co-create and dive into improvisation. Maria found the participants grew more courageous in their exploration. The fusion of dance, music and humour in the choreography facilitated by Maria became a story without the prior intention.

LEARNINGS: Given every single participant's input in the joint ritual, an absence of one or another person would result in a different ritual. Maria observed differences also with this approach with her children and adult groups: the children would take what you gave them without giving it too much thought, whereas adults would think about what it meant for them, how they felt, what would change from one time to the next.

THE GIFT: In the final Lab in December, Maria guided the ARL participants in a ritual of our own, using names, finding our animal (or another movement) and sound, creating and repeating a joint choreography.

Project 8: Ligia Libertori AKA Margarita

Research question: Is a personal relationship necessary for finding a moment for multidisciplinary improvisation?

CONTEXT: Ligia is a professional singer, improviser, performer, composer and clowness. She has been working as a medical clowness for about 20 years in different organisations in Germany and Argentina. Since 2016 she has been working as a clowness in Rote Nasen Deutschland. Throughout her career, Ligia has been fusing her background in music with her work with vulnerable groups. In addition to her many talents, Ligia has been developing musical instruments from recycled materials, developing workshops for RED NOSES International and Germany on this. Ligia joined the ARL to continue building her exploration of the relationship between singing, acrobatics and aerials and other arts, and to exchange with other participants on the wholeness of art rather than separate skills and specialisations that are unique to different art forms. In her words:

> *"I see in this lab a wonderful "kitchen" to cook a lot of "new dishes and techniques", to discover more aspects and bring them back to our work in medical clowning."*

The context where Ligia applied her ARL research is with six participants in an improvisational Playground - a space for artists from different disciplines to come together and improvise in real time. In addition to their artistic backgrounds, the participants share a cultural background, all with a link to Latin America and currently living in Germany. The Playground methodology revolves around multidisciplinarity, where all participants invoke their different disciplines to play and learn.

ARTISTIC TOOLS: Ligia's approach centred on the main idea of the Playground itself - of multidisciplinary improvisation that, when performed with people from a similar background and involving informal exchange in addition to the performing itself - becomes a teleporting experience for those involved.

METHOD FOR DATA COLLECTION: Ligia conducted interviews with the participants of the Playground and conducted direct observation and joint reflection and documenting findings as a means to gather data for her research. She had the core participants she worked with as the 'treatment' group and new people that would come in as the 'control' group. The idea behind the comparison is that the new people joining have not yet had the chance to 'break bread' with the other participants, with the theory that without this prior relationship-building, reaching the 'portal' would be harder. The questions revolved around whether participants experienced a 'portal' - a moment of going beyond the disciplines and each individual's contribution in the improvisation to

something that becomes greater than the sum of all parts. Ligia also conducted her experiment 'live' in the final ARL Lab in December.

IMPACT ON HERSELF AND PARTNER(S): Ligia had a clear vision of finding coherence in multidisciplinary improvisation through a deeper connection. The ARL provided food for thought in her varied practice as an artist working to build that connection in all her endeavours and exploring the value of that for the end result. The participants in the Playground all delved into reflections about what conditions are important for them to reach the 'portal' in improvisation.

IMPACT ON BENEFICIARIES: Ligia in the course of the ARL explored her research question with peers in the Playground, where participants play for their own experience and learning rather than performing in healthcare settings.

LEARNINGS: While the research question centred on the importance of the people improvising together to have had a previous personal connection, a learning that emerged along the way that trust is an important precondition, and this may or may not be related to having established a prior relationship. When comparing the importance of having an informal connection when working with someone in the context of the Playground vs the RED NOSES organisation, Ligia found it was more important in the context of the Playground given it is a place not bound by rules or hierarchies, and thus involved more risk for the participants.

THE GIFT: Ligia's gift to the ARL colleagues was experiencing a relationship-building event - a dinner together. Ligia's dinner idea actually greatly influenced the dynamics and choice of location for the final lab in December. The ARL then took place in the International School of Humour, which comes equipped with a kitchen. The dinner became a core part of the last lab, bringing together all participants and keeping us together in the afterhours of the official agenda. Ligia invited ARL participants to cook together, and in the course of the preparations to indulge in small get-to-know-you-better exercises that had us thinking about our most embarrassing and exciting moments to date, trying to guess characters chosen to us by our peers, all the while cooking a dinner of pasta and veg. Participants in the sharing after the dinner shared an appreciation of the connecting exercises and dynamics while working on a common goal - dinner - provided to all of us.

Project 9: Jolyane Langlois

Research question: When I'm in a place where I feel safe to express my feelings how does this affect my work?

CONTEXT: Jolyanne is a Canadian dance artist and movement facilitator working out of Vienna, Austria. She is studying dance movement psychotherapy, and has trained in Canadian Clowning, also known as 'Pochinko'. Jolyanne in her previous exploration of both disciplines found the strong connection dancers and clowns share with the here & now. The invitation to join the ARL served as an opportunity to reconnect with the Red Nose, which she embraced to deepen through personalised research. Jolyanne spent the first half of the ARL finding a relevant research question to explore. Her thinking involved studying how spontaneity can enrich the everyday of both the performer of the unexpected and their recipient. Through further exploration, and particularly after a conversation with a colleague on how expectation and anxiety affect how artists feel and perform, Jolyanne settled on the question of how thinking and talking about one's well-being affects her work. Jolyanne explored her research question with her dance artist colleagues in the course of rehearsals for a show they are developing. In Jolyanne's own words:

"In my artistic practice, I use play as an act of resistance and cathartic remembering of our ability to still hold a sense of wonder and lightness. I am determined to spread love and magic into this world, and the Red Nose is in my opinion the best way to do that."

ARTISTIC TOOLS: Jolyanne is working on a 'Toolbox for emotional care in Artistic Processes' which involves finding ways to recognize, map, draw emotions and deal with them in rehearsal settings to increase the personal well-being of each artist involved, but also the ways of working together. One such tool is a body map where one can indicate and draw emotions in the place where they are most prominent. The maps served as helpful tools not only in the beginning of the day, but throughout, as artists could come back to them with movement meditation to move the emotion that needed to be moved.

METHOD FOR DATA COLLECTION: Jolyanne conducted self-observation and gathered 'emotional maps' from her colleagues.

IMPACT ON HERSELF/CLOWNING: Jolyanne recounts having much more clarity about emotions, holding a space for them without living through all of them.

IMPACT ON BENEFICIARIES: For Jolyanne and colleagues, the attention to one's own and each other's emotions provided for increased calm and well-being in the rehearsal process.

LEARNINGS: *"Emotions are in all disciplines an immense source of creative input – we can use our emotions or those we feel from others to feed into our creative input. If we practise getting in touch with our emotions, it may be easier to attune to the emotions of others. Attunement to what I'm putting into a space and receiving, it's a way to take care of the common space we share."*

THE GIFT: In the final Lab, Jolyanne invited the participants to identify, draw and embody their own emotions. In the circle of sharing after Jolyanne's gift, several participating healthcare clowns shared stories of visits where they reached their emotional limits to the point of prioritising 'the pilot' behind their clown, who may be too overwhelmed with emotion to continue the visit, or stories of how they embraced a strong emotion without having to pretend or dichotomise.

Project 10: Melanie Gemeiner AKA Anna-Bella
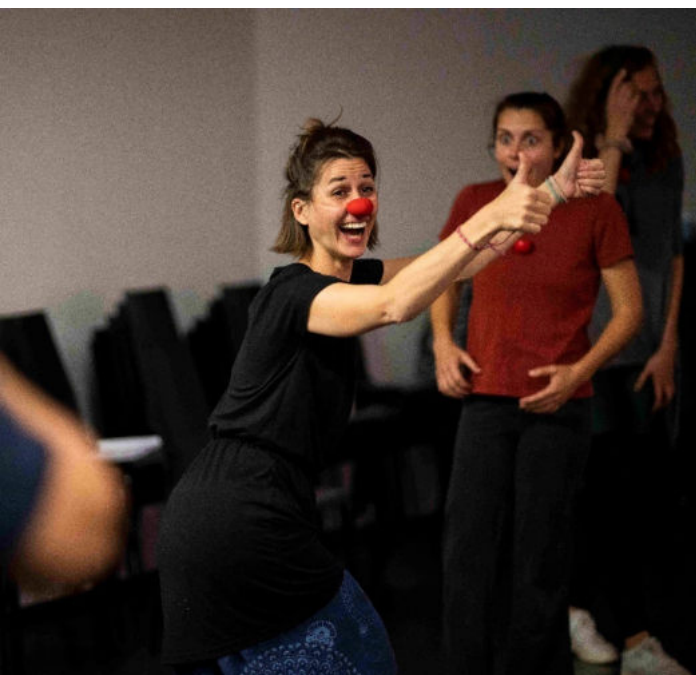
Research question: Melanie explored two research questions in the ARL. She started with an exploration of the eyes of people she was visiting, with her clown interpreting the eye movements of her viewers. Her research question then evolved into: What happens when she - Anna Bella - consciously introduces breath to her practice?

CONTEXT: Melanie is a professional actress, dancer, psychological coach in training under supervision, and clowness with ROTE NASEN Austria for the past 12 years.

Melanie joined the ARL to continue investing in her personal and professional growth. In Melanie's own words:

> "Becoming an even better vehicle for all aspects of my work and being would be a wonderful achievement."

Melanie explored her research question during her regular visits in the hospitals with children and in geriatric care visits to the elderly.

ARTISTIC TOOLS: In the course of her research Melanie 'tried on' two research questions. One involved letting people's eye movements lead her own movements. While it turned out difficult and not always intuitive for the viewers to understand this new 'power' granted to them, this exploration also uncovered new ways of clowning for her and her partners - e.g. they started exploring their bodies as musical instruments. In the evolved research question, Melanie focused entirely on introducing (conscious) breath - its absence, its abundance, its depth, its overtness, its covertness, its rhythm - into her healthcare clowning work.

METHOD FOR DATA COLLECTION: Melanie used self-observation and reflection with her partners after the visits to explore what changed in them, what they observed. The reflections were mostly verbal, documented by writing or voice recording.

IMPACT ON HERSELF/CLOWNING: Melanie observed changes throughout her exploration with the ARL. Her clown Anna-Bella (usually very fast, a good mix of structured and a bit crazy, with a rather rigid posture) found herself thinking slower, being more relaxed, more mature, more connected with her colleagues and the audience through a "common breath" that was installed, less tired after the visits. Her colleagues pointed out the benefits of conscious introduction of breathing in clowning on themselves and their wellbeing and level of enjoyment when clowning together. They feel that her clown Anna-Bella has an "enlightened", esoteric side now that opens new possibilities for play. In Melanie's own words:

> "In hospitals(…) - it's a work environment, quick, improvising, but if you take time to breathe it's a different notion. [Breathing] opens us to a very conscious "here and now", it connects us more to the moment, who we are, how we are, where we are, to rhythm. Sensing our audience even more."

IMPACT ON BENEFICIARIES: Melanie found breathing as therapeutic to all involved. Playing with breath was an intuitive tool to fall back on for the clown and easy to connect to for both children and elderly. Particularly the relaxation and release provided by breath proved very powerful with beneficiaries - in hospital visits, the act of breathing with people in pain or distress on more than one occasion provided relief to the point of tears.

LEARNINGS: Melanie's exploration with her original research question provided insights, that e.g. that a change in the clowning practice should be accessible to both the clown and the audience for it to work. The initial idea of being 'driven' by eye movements of the clients was not sufficiently intuitive for either the people being visited nor the clowns themselves. Breathing on the other hand is something that instantly connects people in a given space. Among many other learnings, Melanie found the importance of introducing conscious breath as a concept into people's lives very early on as an always present tool for relaxation and (emotional) regulation. In Melanie's own words:

"Breathing supports the effect of the target group getting better. It can reduce pain perception and (emotional) Stress. Children (...)– when they connect to their breath they can learn to self-regulate fears, an overload of emotions, etc...The brain starts to „slow down" and the nervous system can calm down again."

THE GIFT: In the final Lab in December, Melanie invited the participants into the world of Anna-Bella in one of her visits. She performed a solo skit showcasing some of the explorations with breathing she has applied during her visits in the course of the ARL.

Project 11: Elda Gallo

Research question: Elda's research question was an exploration in and of itself. Inspired by the clowns' celebration of mistakes, Elda researched how this can be applied in the context of developing a show in dance. The final research question was then about what happens when you embrace failure?

CONTEXT: Elda is an Italian-born choreographer, performer, dancer and teacher based in Vienna, Austria. She was drawn to the ARL particularly as she started exploring the social aspect of her profession which has seen her exploring contact improvisation with families with children or developing performances for children on the topic of ecology. In Elda's own words:

"Dance is an outlet channel for emotions, tensions, pain and joys. Through dance those can be manifested without having to follow the logic of language. Therefore, I believe that every human being should have the right to dance".

ARTISTIC TOOLS: Inspired by the clowns feeding on mistakes rather than being discouraged by them, Elda explored mistakes in rehearsal settings, soon to find that choreographers will be prone to correcting them as an imperfection in a planned choreography. Still recognizing the need for self-care in the stressful and high-pace dance performer's reality, Elda developed a 'failure inventory' that was sometimes shared verbally, other times in writing. The artists performing in the rehearsal would share what would spell failure for them in the beginning of the day, and consider whether this is connected to some more general fear they have. Other people would then add to the failure inventory what they can personally do to welcome and make this failure less scary. The loop would then close with a reflection of how going through this process changed the overall working experience.

METHOD FOR DATA COLLECTION: Elda gathered the failure inventory both in writing and from verbal exchanges. She also collected data live in the final Lab of the ARL with the participants.

IMPACT ON HERSELF/CLOWNING: Elda felt grateful with herself for going through this experience, even if the very act of finding a research question that fit with what she wanted to do was stressful and felt like failure was nearby.

IMPACT ON BENEFICIARIES: Data gathered from participants in the rehearsals where Elda explored her research question shows they felt more comfortable, more relaxed and open, supported by others but also connected and attentive to their needs. They appreciated the transparency and mutual understanding this produced, felt less of a need to exert control. The participants in the ARL were all live witnesses to what the impact of vocalising biggest fears of failure before an anxiety-producing event is - the final ARL where we all had to present our research, as Elda's exercise was one of the first we embarked on. The participants had an open discussion after the closing of the circle of sharing in the final day of the lab, and shared feeling more open and safe with the group, knowing that no matter what, everyone will be accepted. In the words of one of the facilitators of the Lab, Patrick L. van den Boom:

> *"When we get naked from the start you draw a line into the depth of the art. So brave to start with that. Failing is freedom."*

An important impact of Elda's research has been also on the RED NOSES International - we have used the method as an opener for other laboratories, all with the same team building and de-stressing effect.

LEARNINGS: Elda tried two approaches - one where people write down their imagined failures and others comment on how they could cushion them; the other where people talk about their failures and offer support in a live verbal sharing session. The written approach though also useful proved much safer but also less emotional. Elda learned how vocalizing fears makes them small, and makes it possible to be more present and less serious.

THE GIFT: Elda invited the ARL participants in a circle of sharing our fears and anxieties as we embarked on our final Lab. There were few rules, other than sharing what we are fearful or excited about, and verbalizing what others can do to support us throughout the experience. People could also say whether they accept to be touched or not, as many a group hugging/movement inspired contact ensued.

Annex 2: Exercises

A list of some exercises used during the Artistic Research Lab

Clowning

1. MACHINE - exercise

   Half of the group does the exercise, other half observes. One person enters the space with a clear specific movement, sound or gesture. He/she keeps the tempo low and the rhythm clear. As others join and offer their own actions, everybody listens to the group to create an unique "machine" where the group is aware of itself by following the leader. When the leader feels everybody is inside, he/she can play with the tempo (slower, faster..)

2. Warm up body and voice different parts of the body

   As you put attention to a certain part of the body, you express the inner feeling with your voice, allowing yourself to be surprised.

3. Yes, no, and yes to the no game

   The game has three levels. Work is in couples.

   One person makes a suggestion beginning with "Lets!" or "Shall we?" and the other one:

   - Says "YES" and does what was asked
   - Says "NO" and does the opposite of what was asked
   - says "YES " and does the opposite

   What its used for: Exploring of the range of emotions, when getting positive or negative response, also getting to know the base of the clown humor (variation 3)

   Variation: Add the clown nose

4. Whish, Spoing, Zap

   In a circle. Either 1) continue in the direction in the circle with the sound "whish" and with an arm movement to next neighbour, reverse the direction in the circle with the sound "spoing" and with two hands up to previous neighbour, or send to a non-neighbor in the circle with the sound "zap" and two arms pointing to the intended recipient. Keep a steady rhythm. If someone makes a mistake, including falling out of rhythm, they walk a lap inside the circle to celebrate their "failure". Everyone else cheers them on.

   Purpose: In clowning, we don't cover up mistakes, but rather celebrate our flaws, mistakes and deficiencies. The challenge is to tap into our own feelings and emotions, rather than performing them in an exaggerated way. It is important to really look at the audience. This honesty and vulnerability allows our audience to connect with us, empathise with us and laugh about their own feelings of weakness.

5. Trust and sharing

   In pairs, one person closes their eyes and the partner guides them through the space. Whenever the guide wishes, she can give her partner a signal to open her eyes to receive a visual gift the guide has chosen for her.

Purpose: In clowning, it is important to learn to trust your partner to take care of you, and it is important to gain your partner's trust by taking care of them. Find out what your partner needs to feel safe. Much of non-stage clowning is improvised, so we are constantly exchanging impulses/proposals/gifts with our partners. Learn to tap into the emotions you feel when you receive such a proposal/gift.

6. My partner is a genius. look what she/ he can do, wooow

How to: Two couples, one is performing, other couple is the audience (clown always needs the audience)

One person in the couple is the presenter, completely amased by his/her partner. The other one can, or does not have to do anything special. The point is whatever the partner does, number one is completely amased and proud of it. The line everybody uses is "Look what she can do!". The point in the exercise is to build emotions and the status of the partner, and share it with the audience, as well as for the partner- learn how you can just stand and be present in the situation, explore how does it feel to be so appreciated.

7. Sing a song customised

Work in couples, spread across the room in two lines, so there is as much space as possible between the couples.

One person wants to give a personalised gift to his/her partner. It is a song or a sound or a specific movement, the person needs to find out what makes his/her partner smile! And when she finds she can come closer, if the person is not happy with what is done, the person cant go closer.

Its like creating a specific gift for a person, without clearly knowing what the gift will be, only thing clear is the wish to give the gift!

8. Throw and catch

In a circle, establish a fixed order of passing a ball from one person to the next, ideally across the circle, such that everyone throws once. Once the order is clear, each person develops a unique movement with the ball, which should include turning around 360 degrees.

Purpose: In clowning, the audience and our partners guide the decisions we make. If the audience reacts to something, we stick with that. If they do not react, we let it go and try something else. We develop huge antennas to read our audience. It is not even necessary to know why the audience is reacting. We develop our unique movement with a spin in this way - letting our audience guide us.

In a second round, we do our movement and spin around with our eyes closed and then throw the ball to the next person in the fixed order with our eyes closed. Our partner tries to catch the ball but must keep both feet firmly on the floor. Both people accept and feel whatever reaction the audience has to their successful or failed attempt to pass the ball.

Purpose: In clowning, we rely on authorities to create rules that constrain us in ways that my help us honestly fail. This authority can be a child/senior in a healthcare facility (empowerment), our clown partner (and we say "yes!" to the rules), a circus director with power over life and death

(often in workshops), or an imagined authority, such as "the boss". By honestly and genuinely trying hard to succeed, we make ourselves more vulnerable and can more sincerely share our joy if we succeed or our disappointment/frustration if we fail.

9. A guided clown journey

Enter the room alone, experiencing and discovering the world, the surroundings, and oneself as if for the first time. No interaction with others yet. Look for extraordinary/interesting things in the room. Choose one thing that you think others need to see/experience. Share your chosen thing with a clown partner. Shift your focus to "imperfect" things in the room. Choose one imperfection and share it with a new partner. Focus on yourself. Choose and share something wonderful about yourself with another partner. Sticking with that partner, take time to choose something you consider "imperfect" about yourself - part of your body, a personality trait, a negative attribute or habit. Share this with your partner. After both have shared, transform this "imperfection" into something wonderful, incredible, uniquely special.

Purpose: Clowns often see the world through naive eyes, questioning norms and limits. Clowns take risks by not knowing or understanding their surroundings. In clowning, we can tap into our own weaknesses, shortcomings and vulnerabilities to feel and share our deep humanness with the rest of the world. This allows our audience to fall in love with us, empathise deeply with us, and share in our triumphs and failures. It is important to assess how safe we can feel in any one setting, and to be gentle and loving with ourselves.

10. Closing circle dance

Music "Woodsmoke and Oranges". Dance steps:
Stand in circle, hands together, point thumbs to the right, hold hands.
Face R. Walk 8 steps forward, begin with R. On beat 8, face L
Walk 8 steps forward, begin with R
Repeat. On beat 8, face middle
Release hands. 4 double steps toward middle: diag forward R, close L, diag forward L close R. Repeat
Meanwhile, extend arms diagonally, gradually raising them toward ceiling.
Shake hands for 2 beats
3 double steps backwards: back L, close R, back R, close L, back L, close R.
Meanwhile, close hands, thumbs to right, hold hands.
Facing middle, cross R over L, side L. Repeat. On last beat, face R

Additional exercises suggested by Patrick Van Den Boom for overcoming stage fright:

11. The square

Imagine a square on the floor for example max 1 meter big. This meter can stand for many things, many obstacles can be stage fright. Often how I see it the obstacle is a mind-based thing. In my mind, I already think how it is to ...... for example be on stage. But the moment before I am not

yet on stage So, maybe we often create an obstacle in our head. With the square, you can practice and say this is the obstacle of going on stage.

Start deciding how long you take with going into the square, 5 min or 3 or 1 minute. So you walk around the square r but don't go in yet. It's a building. and when I teach this I build this up, like putting a spoon with oil on the fire and that at the end after for example 3 min of stepping in and staying in it, It often gives a lot of realization that it is the mind, that when we stand in it or on the "stage" we handle it not too bad or we are fine. So it then we can act, not before that is just talking or thinking about how it will be.

12. Mask work

In a way you can " hide " behind the mask and express all feelings with the face. Nobody will see it. Still, the body sees it all. It can be good to separate it the body and the face. The face is often so fast to put an opinion there, or act it out, and the body maybe is much more okay with it, not so affected by the mind.

13. Play with the theme

Play with the drama, overact it. It is a lot with the yes to the no

So one clown does not want to go to one stage and one clown is very at home on stage; like stage is here his home. This theme can become so much fun to play with it. It is material we all know and the one not wanting might realize how important a role she has. How much attention this person gets. Yes to the drama is yes to the no, and the no can become so much fun and can create a big Yes

Additional suggestion from Marina Bažulić:
14. Secret Circle

Works in a couple, one person is only allowed to speak and one person is only allowed to receive (no thank you, or any other comments from his/her side, only receive and observe what happens in their heart and mind). The one who speaks should try to find (even if they don't know each other) various honest compliments and shower the other person with it. They should sit one across other and have eye contact. 3 mins and then they switch roles.

Dance
1. Introductions

Not a performance but a sharing moment (for example, the teachers and each participant has 2 minutes to present themselves how they want – very free and creative, playful, non-cognitive.

Each participant and facilitator has 2 minutes to think about and feel into how they want to introduce themselves to the group and what they want to share (verbally, physically or musically) with the group. For the introduction each participant has 60 seconds. After 60 seconds Katharina Senk will gently wave her arms up in the air as a sign that the time is over. "You are the master of your one minute."

We ask the participants to mention their name and how they want to be addressed as part of the introduction. If preparations need to be done, they can happen in these 2 minutes.

This introduction can be very playful, free and creative. It´s not about labels or job descriptions, and it's for sure not a performance. It's about consciously sharing your energy and personality with the group.

2. Guided Warm-up of the joints and muscles in the body and face and some balancing

(Exercise Connecting Breath and Movement), Exercise of 3 minutes of Shaking, Partner-Exercise playing with speed and Interdependence

BALANCING: Standing on one leg and with eyes closed. Connecting to your Core. Continuing to breath. Playing with your balance.

BOUNCING: Connecting to rhythm and the beat. Sending your energy to other participants. Bounce and jump through the space - staying connected with each other.

GROUNDING - BREATHING EXERCISE: Breath in and do a conscious movement - Hold breath, don´t move and Exist - Breath out and do a conscious movement - Exist - breath in and move again and so on.

WORKING WITH IMAGE OF HAVING EYES ALL OVER THE BODY - IDEA FROM KALARIPAYATTU (SOUTHERN INDIAN MARTIAL ARTS) THAT THE BODY BECOMES ALL EYES

SUPERPOWER-INTERACTION-GAME WITH PARTNER: One partner has imagined superpower - the other partner reacts. Add-on: Both act and react at the same time!

ADDING VOICE AND SPECIAL-EFFECT-SOUNDS, becoming aware about the energies you send into the space; *Your energy matters!*, Practicing Listening and Creativity

ADDING "DRAMA": In many exercises when fitting. Allowing yourself to enter this state of physical expression of emotion. Allowing yourself to completely over exaggerate.

INTERDEPENDENCE-GAMES WITH PARTNER:

- Slow Motion and High Speed: One person guides and either moves in Slow-Motion or High Speed. Partner reacts by always doing the opposite.
- Space Levels: One partner guides by either moving on the Floor-Level or Standing Level. Partner reacts by always doing opposite. Practicing Principle of Up & Down. Asking participants to explore this principle. What does "Down" and "Up" mean? What is their version of doing it?

3. Translation

   Movement and Dance as a Connector! Ideas and Proposals on how to translate movement and movement energies between bodies, including people with different physical and mental capacities. *Principles over form/shapes!!!*
   e.g. for movement principles: Going-Down-and-Up, Turning, Shaking, Waving, Falling, Bouncing/Jumping, Floating/Melting, Balancing, Moving forward/backward
   Sharing some of these principles with participants - also physically doing some of them together.

4. Partner Exercises

   One partner dances with one body part (hand, face, foot,...). The other translates the same movement into the whole body. We did translation from Face to Body.
   Adding Voice/Sound as a Translator: Translation from Body to Voice. One partner moves, other partner translates movement into Sound. Possible also the other way round.

5. Music

   Connecting single body parts to the Music. Connecting the whole body with the music.

Music

1. Circle groove

   Body percussion and singing. Breathing and voice, improvisation

2. Singing Warm Up

   Song "Good Morning", learning phrases by call & response,

3. Vocal Warm up

   Call & response, increasing diffuculty level

4. Sounds in Circles

   Passing on different sounds, two directions. Advanced level: three different sounds (two vocal Sounds + one stomping sound)

5. The "piano steps"

   The facilitator starts stomping with left foot - right neighbour left foot - Facilitator right foot - right neighbour right foot - right neighbour left foot etc.

6. Find your Band

   The participants can choose an Instrument (Bass, Percussion or Melody). Then everybody starts to imitating the instrument. The participants should try to form a band.

RED NOSES is an artistic organisation bringing humour and laughter to people in need of joy.

For 25 years, RED NOSES has been making a difference for patients, families and medical staff in countless health and care facilities in Europe and beyond.

RED NOSES International (RNI) empowers vulnerable audiences, such as children in hospitals, people in geriatric centres, patients in rehabilitation centres, youth with mental and multiple disabilities, refugees and other displaced persons.

The figure of the clown is extremely human and touches individuals deeply by bringing them relief and hope in moments where they cannot connect to their positive emotions.

RNI is based in Vienna, Austria, and is the headquarters for the largest clown doctor group in the world.

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RED NOSES
In Laughter there is Hope