

One truck, One Parade

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One truck one parade

The One Truck One Parade is based on a first years assignment of the Networked Media Design master studies. The assignment involves getting information from the streets of Rotterdam (SUCK), processing and rearranging the collected information (DIRECT), and give this processed information back to the city in a newly organized way(RELEASE).

Paradoxical interest of the government confront organizations behind festivals and events with new restrictions amongst security. On one hand the city of Rotterdam profiles itself as a festival-city with a long tradition on free festivals and unique events (Grand Départ van de Tour de France, Dance Parade, Metropolis Festival, Dunya en Bavaria City Racing). On the other hand the government decided on a aggravation of conditions in the event-policy of 2010. This decision was based on a bad experience during the Liberation-festival in Rotterdam, and the COT-analysis of the riots in Hoek van Holland.

This project is focused on the cancellation of the Rotterdam Dance Parade due to stricter rules and regulations. The final result of this project is a protest parade in public space against Ahmed Aboutaleb organized in the Rotterdam city center.

SUCK

The Fast Forward Dance Parade is an annual free dance event organized since 1997 by JMR in Rotterdam. The event is a procession of approximately 40 trucks playing loud dance music, passing through the center of Rotterdam.

Each truck is arranged and sponsored by record labels, clubs, radio stations and commercial products which identify themselves with the dance scene. On the trucks stand DJ's who play electronic dance music, accompanied by dancers. The trucks with the sound systems are moving along the route while the crowd is experiencing the audio and visual aspects of the parade. It attracts around 400.000 visitors.

Normally this dance culture is only visible at night in a concert hall, nightclubs or football stadium. With the Dance Parade this subculture is made visible in public space at daylight, confronting the general public of Rotterdam with the mainstream dance culture.

Recently a new event policy for Rotterdam was based on recommendation in the COT-analysis of two shooting incidents:

The Liberation day 2009 riots(05/05/2009), where a group of people turns against authority

Hoek van Holland riots (23/08/2009), where shots of the police resulted in several wounded and one deadly victim.

In January of 2010 the government decided on stricter safety rules and more regulations. Event-licenses are only supplied when an event takes place on an enclosed area, the area of the event is well illuminated, a pre-sale of the tickets needs to take place, visitors are completely checked and searched and only drinks with a low alcohol beverage are allowed.

Not all existing event and festival-concepts can be fitted in this policy. A procession through the city can not be restricted to an enclosed area and registration of personal identities (through ticket-sale) is impossible to regulate when a crowd is moving. The new policy rules do not comply with the format of the Fast Forward Dance Parade and the event-license was withdrawn by the mayor, although the Fast Forward Dance Parade and the shooting incidents have no direct link.

This year there is no edition of the Dance Parade in Rotterdam after an annual tradition since 1997.

On the 6th of March 2010 a demonstration was organized against the decision that the Dance Parade could not be organized in the same way as the previous editions. Around 300 participants were demonstrating at the Coolsingel, in front of the City Hall and a great amount of individuals showed their support against the decision online through the social network site Hyves.

DIRECT

The mayor of Rotterdam wants to keep the image as a festival-city stated in the year report of 2009. But this year the message from Ahmed Aboutaleb about festivals and events is different, the policy for the Dance Parade in Rotterdam has changed.

Since 1997 the route of the Rotterdam Dance Parade is changing every year depending on the government event-policy. The organization behind the Dance Parade (JMR) provided the information about the routes of previous editions. Maps of the editions from 2005 until 2009 are available with detailed information about the routes. Particular parts of the route are the Nieuwe Binnenweg (with the exception of 2009), the Coolsingel section (abandoned after several years) and the Erasmus Bridge (from 2003 up to 2006).

For the 2010 One truck, One parade–protest all the routes were remixed to create a new megamix–route of past years.

The main focus is on the current mayor of Rotterdam Ahmed Aboutaleb: the key figure in the media when it comes down to spreading the message about restrictions and rules for the Dance Parade.

RELEASE

Ahmed Aboutaleb decided in his function as a mayor that an event such as the Rotterdam Dance Parade does not comply with the image Rotterdam wants to represent. Hereby he directs himself to the crowd that come to such an event: the visitors would not bring a positive ambiance in Rotterdam and due to the incredible amount of people that is being generated at such a party it is not possible to guarantee the safety of all individuals in the crowd.

Critical issues are being stated as: Is the mainstream dance–culture not able to comply with the now–existing safety restrictions? Is the mainstream scene dangerous? Needs fun to be regulated by the government? And can the government deny such a big dance–scene group as the mainstream scene because it can not be regulated?

Decisions for the general public are being made and thereby a big part of society (partyscene) is being ignored and not represented in the festival spectrum. Conclusions are drawn by the mayor by banning the visibility of the mainstream scene by safety reasons into the ignorance–position. All kinds of multicultural events (Zomercarnaval, Dunya–festival) are being supported by the government, which is really nice, but a large amount of people just identify themselves with a mainstream dance–scene. Are they not legitimated to have their own festival?

Another similar recent example where a mainstream act on a festival is being cancelled by government decisions is Snoop Dogg not performing on the big free festival of Europe (Parkpop) in the Hague. The act was being cancelled by the government on exactly the same grounds: the crowd that the act will generate will not bring along a positive vibe and the safety can not be guaranteed for such scope of the crowd. Further grounded reasons are not presented and arguments that led to this decision are invisible for society.

Normally the Rotterdam Dance Parade is being organized with 40 trucks moving through the city center of Rotterdam. For the protest parade there is only one truck moving through the city according to a remixed route, symbolizing the non–existing Dance Parade 2010. Behind this truck there are people dancing with masks.

On this masks the face of the mayor Ahmed Aboutaleb is printed making the mayor of Rotterdam the main character of the non-existing Dance Parade 2010.

Hereby the general public gets confronted by the decision of the mayor banning the mainstream dance culture from the streets of Rotterdam.

During the One Truck One Parade the iconic logo on the truck and dance music were immediately identified with the Rotterdam Dance Parade. People in the Nieuwe Binnenweg reacted on this protest action by supportive clapping and spontaneously dancing. People on the sidewalks realize the essence of the One truck One Parade and discussion is brought up.

During the opening of the exhibition an Italian expat student linked the displayed work to the actual protest-action held in the city-center. He lives in the neighborhood and heard loud music on the street. When he looked outside the window he saw not an ordinary event. That was why he remembered. He was fascinated by the risk the protesters took putting on the mask of the mayor. He supported the fact that such decisions are made for us on motivational grounds of regulations and safety. ' With canceling an unique event in Rotterdam like the Dance parade you loose touch with society and taking away fun. I disrespect the choice of Aboutaleb.' This was a sign that the protest action is not left unseen in the general public.

About the work

Due to the issue of the project a street elaborated outlook fits the work: with duct tape all work is taped on the wall.

For the exhibition four posters are displayed with information about the history of the dance parade, a poster showing party pictures with on top an in memoriam text and a large poster with a new designed logo for this years one truck one parade protest.

Buttons of tape recorders (Play-button, FFWD-button and Stop-button) are used on another poster to give an overview of all the editions of the Dance Parade. Ivo Opstelten was mayor of Rotterdam during 10 editions of the Dance Parade. His picture is accompanied with ten fast forward buttons. With Ahmed Aboutaleb there is a stop button used as a graphical representation of the non-existing Dance Parade of this year.

The masks that were being used during the protest parade are shown in plastic bags as an example and a not finished example with a do it yourself instruction is shown.

Documentation of the protest during the 'one truck one parade' action is presented as a video clip. The accompanying soundtrack is made out of the track 'La Style - James Brown is Dead' which is edited and remixed with vocals taken from the 'Euromasters' song called 'Rotterdam Ech Wel! This audio-remix symbolizes the decision of the Mayor of Rotterdam (saying Rotterdam is dead).

Exhibition pictures

Disrupting Systems 2 July 2010
Witte de Withstraat 63, Rotterdam



Picture 1: Detail of the mask (Ahmed Aboutaleb)



Picture 2: video still from the videoclip shown in the exhibition



Picture 3: Overview

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