

BELGIUM - MEDIA BUFFER FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

On 12 September, **20 former employees** of internationally renowned artist Jan Fabre wrote an anonymous open letter, denouncing the **toxic culture of abuse of power, sexism, sexual harassment and sexually transgressive behaviour** in Jan Fabre's theatre company Troubleyn. With the letter they wanted to break the culture of silence and strive for an open, conscious and respectful working environment in the media and cultural sector.

A few weeks before the letter appeared, one of its writers contacted the Institute for the equality of women and men. She asked if the Institute could help the group by acting as a media buffer. None of the writers wanted to be caught in a media storm or become the recognisable face of the open letter. In the hours and days following the publication of the letter, the Institute answered the enormous number of press questions and **watched over the anonymity of the signatories.**

This was the first time that the Institute had been the press contact of a large group of victims in a case that had such a strong resonance in national and international media.

Jan Fabre is renowned for pushing boundaries. Did he go too far with his dancers? (The New York Times, September 23th, 2018)

Le chorégraphe belge Jan Fabre accusé de harcèlement sexuel (Le Monde, September 14th, 2018)

12 September 2018

Open Letter: #metoo and Troubleyn/Jan Fabre

From former employees and apprentices at Troubleyn

In the interest of the audience and the wish to inform future generations of performing artists, we, former employees and interns who have worked with Jan Fabre in the context of Troubleyn vzw, have come together to share our experiences and to raise our voices in the context of #metoo and its associated social shifts

We ask the artistic community to support and invest in this conversation. We ask the board of Troubleyn to take their responsibility. We ask the government and their institutions to also consider their role in holding individuals and organisations accountable.

We ask the board of Troubleyn to take their responsibility.

Together we will no longer support a culture of hypocrisy and denial in the name of art. Together we will work towards a more inclusive understanding of artistic freedom.

Today our voices matter. They will be heard.

We, (former) employees and apprentices at Troubleyn, sign in solidarity and in support of all our colleagues,

Press Contact

Institute for the Equality between Women and Men

Choreograaf Jan Fabre beticht van seksisme en machtsmisbruik (NRC Handelsblad, September 13th, 2018)

El artista belga Jan Fabre, acusado de acoso sexual (La Vanguardia, September 13th, 2018)

Impact

The news was picked up by various international media, in the Netherlands, France, Germany and the United States. **The Public Prosecutor's Office of the Antwerp Labour Auditor started an investigation** into Jan Fabre and his theatre company.

As a result of the case, the Institute received several reports from victims and witnesses who concurred with the content of the open letter. The open letter opened the debate in Flanders on transgressive behaviour in the media and culture sector. In the aftermath, the Flemish Minister of Culture and Media appointed an ombudsperson for the cultural and audiovisual sector

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