

Saturday April 21

AltroCirco and the Social Circus Community. AltroCirco team

Jaqué: a network that drags you away. Enrico Giacometto, APS Jaqué, Volvera (TO)

Year 2017: twelve years after its foundation, association Jaqué moves from its previous space – in the basement of a private home – to the Bossatis theatre in the neighbouring town of Volvera. Here, Jaqué offers circus classes, performances and shows, and a space where professional artists can work, train and create.

This new opportunity enables to support the institutional activity of the Association, which concerns mainly educational and social circus. Besides circus classes for people of all ages, Jaqué works in partnership with local social workers and has started different projects for disadvantaged children.

These different activities (shows, social circus, circus classes, creation processes) created synergic connections between artists, audiences, and youth: a network that has the potential to involve and drag away also those who live at the margins of our community.

Enrico Giacometto is a founding member of Association Jaqué, teaches in social and youth circus projects, works as educator with children and adults with physical and mental disabilities.

The potential of circus elements for community building. Steven Desanghere, Circus Planeet, Belgium

Steven Desanghere involves the audience in some refreshing thinking about the role circus schools and projects can play in stimulating community building, starting from the reality and the needs in our neighbourhoods, cities and society. We brainstorm together in how far the 'circus approach' can bridge people and communities, even without using circus any circus technique

Steven Desanghere was bitten- almost twenty years ago - by the circus bug. He has since taught hundreds of classes, run numerous workshops and social programmes, worked with various 'special target groups', and started the neighbourhood circus project at Circusplaneet vzw, in Gent, Belgium. He himself is a huge fan of juggling, and the art of working with groups. In recent years, he gives quite some trainings for circus trainers.

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'Colombia Potencia en Cirqueros' (Colombia a Circus Power): The National School Circo Para Todos (Circus for All) and Circus at the Traffic Lights. Olga Lucía Sorzano, City University of London



El Tiempo Newspaper, April 2016

This presentation explores two different cases in Colombia where circus skills are learned and practiced outside conventional artistic schools. They are the National School Circo Para Todos (Circus for All), regarded as pioneer of 'social circus' (Bolton, 2004), and 'Circus at the traffic lights', the name commonly given to a growing circus movement practiced in the streets of the country.

The first part of the presentation discusses the role of Circo Para Todos in the emergence of 'social circus' and the posterior translation of the movement into conventional social work. This section presents the case of 'social circus' offering professional training to vulnerable populations and the possibility to become circus artists.

The second part introduces the case of 'circus at the traffic lights' in Bogotá, a practice commonly described as busking rather than circus. This section discusses the mechanisms and challenges that circus practitioners face in practicing their art form over the length of the red light. Beyond making their living at the traffic lights, these young performers find on the streets a source of inspiration and a path to become professional artists.

Olga Lucía Sorzano is a visiting lecturer in Sociology at the City University of London, where she just completed her PhD in Culture and Creative Industries. She also has a BA in Economics and an MSc in Economic and Social Policy Analysis. Olga Lucia has extensive experience of policy making in Colombia in social policy, cultural diplomacy and international relations through her work at the National Planning Department and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Her current work is focused in the analysis of invisible figures and unrecognised art forms such as the circus, with special emphasis in Colombia and Britain. Parallel to her academic endeavour, Olga Lucia has worked closely with circus organisation such as the National School Circo Para Todos (Circus for All) in Colombia and the London based production company Circolombia.

War circus project, Helen Averley - Let's Circus, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK

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War Circus, is a research project undertaken in 2016/17 which explores the social history of circus, its international community, business and animal when they became caught up in the events of the Great War 1914 and 1918. This research has uncovered some amazing narratives and events. Helen will introduce some of the iconic individuals from the period, report on their War experience and share some of their amazing stories revealed during the research.

Helen Averley was first a Visual Artist and Anthropologist. 25 years ago she began in circus as an aerialist and acrobat with Belfast Community Circus in 1994, then she developed circus dance theatre and aerial companies in UK. She co-founded Let's Circus with Steve Cousins in 2008, working in Australia, Kenya and UK. 2009 they co-founded Circus Central a youth and community circus school, Newcastle upon Tyne, where Helen was Chief Executive Officer (until 2017). Helen is a Circademic focusing on circus social history & research. She is an advisory board member for Circus250. With Let's Circus she works in all the administrative and technical aspects of running a tented and street circus.

The social circus show and the creation of community relations: experiences from Brazil. Fabio dal Gallo, Federal University of Bahia

The presentation will foster discussions and reflections concerning the role of the show in social circus pedagogy. Processes and phases of creation – as they are shared by schools and organisations of the network “Circo do Mundo Brasil” will be outlined.

Although each organisation has its own artistic methodology and approach to the construction of the show, which is generally a key point of the methodological and pedagogical proposal, common aspects can be highlighted.

Moreover, the show is extremely important to expand competences and experiences connected to the interpersonal relations of the participant in its group context. The show becomes important both for what concerns the acknowledgement of artistic, social and educational outcomes by friends, family members, neighbours, which improves self-esteem; and the strengthening of ties within the local community.

Fabio dal Gallo is lecturer in pedagogy of theatre and theatre in education within the School of Theatre and the Graduate Programme of the University of Bahia. He investigates circus and social circus. He is also a juggler, clown and circus director.

Education in circus: children and adolescents in the itinerant context. Cristina Alves de Macedo, pedagogue, Brazil

Travelling circus activity is connected to a specific lifestyle, typical of itinerant types of work. This requires an ability to integrate into sedentary society and interact with the local community, with the goal of economic sustainability.

Travelling life carries several issues which must be considered, especially when speaking about education.

In the context of the State of Bahia, in Brazil, the presence of small family, travelling circuses is still high. Great part of the people living in these circuses are illiterate or have great educational deficit and live in poverty or subsistence. In these cases, temporary permanence in school represents a problem in which the issue of the relationships with the local community is central.

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The presentation will explore the ways in which these travelling circus communities maintain relationships with the local communities and society in general, in a sense which is both different and similar to social circus: promoting change within its community and in the ways this interacts with the world surrounding it. Both travelling and social circus look at formal education as a possibility of social inclusion, but they also find difficulties to complete this process.

Cristina Alves de Macedo holds a bachelor's degree in Pedagogy and a master's in Language Studies. She is a circus artist, a cultural producer and her research interests concern education in travelling circuses; human development through circus; circus-theatre and circus dramaturgy.

Roundtables

1 Experiences of art and community in Italy and Europe (in English)

This roundtable will discuss the following key questions: artists, educators and social workers often see the arts in general (and circus arts in some cases) as privileged means of community building. Is this true? For what reasons, and in which ways? What are the conditions and best practices which promote community relations through artistic tools? What is the relationship between professional or 'real' art and community arts project and contexts?

Examples of community development around circus in Germany. Wolfgang Pruisken, Circo Hannover, Germany

This presentation will describe concrete examples of community circus in Germany, in particular:

- Cultural houses in Hannover and community development around circus. The project Circo is funded by the city of Hannover and supports around 20 community circus projects in different parts of the city.
- "Bündnisse für Bildung" (Culture makes us strong - Alliance for education). The BAG is now starting a program funded by the ministry of education and science with the title „Zirkus gestaltet Vielfalt“ (Circus creates diversity). Education is the task of society as a whole. Therefore, with the program „Culture makes you strong. Covenants for Education“, the German government wants to strengthen civil society engagement and networking. Alliances for education consist of at least three institutions or associations that engage in non-formal education for children and adolescents. In the BAG run program one partner will be a youth circus. The partners bring different skills and perspectives. The alliances work locally: They pick up the children and young people where they are and use them to organize (circus) workshops, courses or vacations.

Wolfgang Pruisken is a teacher and coordinator of leisure activities in different comprehensive schools. Director and founder of Circo – Centre of Circus Arts in Hannover. Member of the boards of Lower Saxony youth circus umbrella and the German national youth circus organization „BAG Zirkus“. Coordinator of the administrative masterclasses (PEYC), President of the European youth circus organization (EYCO)

The Minimal Circus Project. Vincenzo Tumminello, Scuola di Circo Minimal Circus, Saronno

Minimal Circus is a small circus company born within a Professional High School in Saronno (VA). For four years the project has been addressing students for which socio-economic disadvantage and other youth-related

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issues provoke school drop-out, irregular attendance, and failure. Moreover, the project is situated in an area where more than 40% of the students have a migrant background.

Through circus pedagogy (inspired by Paulo Freire), we foster respect for the Other and awareness about one's Self. Within our school community we turned the circus into a privileged space to promote change in behaviours and relationships. The circus group includes 25 youth aged 15-20 and has realised more than 30 shows in different contexts.

Vincenzo Tumminello was born in Palermo in 1977. He graduated in Philosophy and became a teacher in History and Philosophy and specialised in teaching to students with special needs in Veneto and Lombardia. He has been running a social circus project in a high school in Saronno for more than five years.

Reus Circ Social: Rafa Arencón - Reus Circ Social, Spagna

What kinds of community develop around contemporary practices, and in which ways?

In Reus Circ Social, we build a community based on:

- Free association: Where those who are obligated together in other contexts here are by will.
- Solidarity: Being intimate, in a medium city, situations are known. Good communication and the authenticity of the members make it fraternal.
- Innovation and tradition: always seeks to experiment, but has some rituals and techniques to transmit (sometimes ancestral).
- Transformation: with a radically different basis from the society of its environment (the strong down, the weak up).
- Construction and development of the community: from a scout group in a reformed Catholic community, we developed an autonomous community, retaining its roots in the Baden Powell methodology and the humanist worldview of ecumenical scope. Our work is focused on the person who seeks to give meaning to a healthy life, promotion through education and community commitment.

How is the circus used within existing communities, contributing to its reinforcement and / or transformation?

- We reject that a country, a city is a community. As in the Ionescu play, a rhino country is not exactly a community. This can be perceived by some of the people who make circus with us (undocumented African minors). We can talk about a community project, lacking in humanity. We also reject the fact that the institutional "educational community" is so.
- We will take as communities of analysis the young people of the city and the MENAs (unaccompanied foreign minors).
- Our references to influence the two communities: Educators, young people like them - Some, immigrants like them - Embarked in the same process of valuing their health, seeking social promotion and commitment to the community.
- Specific case of MENAs: social skills and construction of leadership based on the circus project. Beginnings of the process and current moment.

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- The future of our project and what we have discovered since our beginnings.

Rafa Arencón was born in Reus, Catalonia (Spain) 49 years ago. He has a degree in Law and an educator, as well as an Anglican Reverend. He trained as a social circus trainer at the Ateneu de Nou Barris in Barcelona. He launched the Reus Circ Social project in 2013 from a Scout grouping. His work develops in a multicultural context with an emphasis on social justice

2. Circus arts and international cooperation (Ita/Eng)

South America in the histories of 'social circus', Olga Lucía Sorzano, City University of London

The presentation offers an account of the history and meaning of social circus in Latin America that differs from those acknowledged in official narratives. I will discuss how the official narrative surrounding social circus is in fact an appropriation of an alternative movement that emerged in Latin America in the 1990s to fight cultural and sociopolitical barriers imposed on low-income children and youth. In the institutionalization and formalization process, the social circus movement was translated into the language and categories of the North -- more precisely, into the terminology used by funders and stakeholders, as well as divisions between the artistic and other human spheres resulting in the European Enlightenment. The analysis is part of my PhD research that analyses the process of recognition of circus as art in 21st century Britain and Colombia. The methodology includes semi-structured interviews, textual analysis, political economy, and multi-sited ethnography.

The Network Tejido de Circo Social in Ecuador. Tommaso Negri, AltroCirco

Una vida linda: the Mato Grosso operation in Peru. Marco Borrello, Accademia Don Bosco

A group of very different people tied by the same fil rouge. Results overcame expectations: within the Mato Grosso Operation there is usually the desire of doing something good and following this red wire we decided to take the circus to youth who did not know it. Our circus show "Una vida linda" was offered to schools, churches, communities, together with other helpful actions.

Marco Borrello was born in Orvieto (Umbria). He has been working with different social projects in Italy and Peru.

The experience of Educators without Borders. Giorgia Dell'uomo, Educatori Senza Frontiere

Educators without borders operates nationally and internationally, in disadvantaged contexts, providing trainings. Since 2014 we have been offering theatre and circus projects in Honduras, within a rehabilitation centre for people with drugs and alcohol abuse problems. We found that these tools greatly support processes of growth and rehabilitation. The presentation will outline the results of these projects and our future plans.

Giorgia Dell'uomo holds a bachelor degree in Community Education and a diploma from the Performing Art University Torino, where she is now pedagogic assistant and teacher. She is a volunteer in Honduras and Brazil for Educators without Borders.

3. NO TAVolo: circus as a language of struggle and resistance (Italian only)

4. Circus, gender and the LGBTQI+ community (Italian only)

Sunday April 22

The power of circus: Karen Decoster - Circusplaneet, Gent, Belgio

Circusplaneet is an organization situated in Ghent, in a precarious neighborhood and there is a high need of organized leisure time. I wrote a master thesis about 'the power of circus'. It was an explorative research concerning the experience and appreciation of community circus by the kids themselves and their network.

Last year we worked actively on building that community. There were already a lot of different ingredients, but we had to mix and match them all together. This found its origin in the weekly Friday training, named 'community training'. We started in September 2017 and the training takes place in our church. In 2015 we bought a church in an underprivileged neighborhood in Ghent (Malem). We wanted to continue our social projects and since that time we had a clear and symbolic space to develop that community.

In the church we try to bring everything and everyone together, and it works! The training starts at 5pm, but at 10 to 5pm the kids of the neighborhood are jumping in front of the door, full of excitement, some artists come in and show their best tricks, the kids are astonished and the artists help them in learning new skills, 2 boys who were fighting the first lessons are now holding hands while walking on the barrel, a girl with a mental disability is doing circus assisted by somebody who is doing his internship, some of the mothers are knitting scarfs in our lounge... This year we will organize for the third time a festival in and with the neighborhood/community. In that place on those moments, we are building community, there is happening some magic which we cannot describe in words.

Karen Decoster discovered the magical world of circus only a few years ago. She did her internship at Circusplaneet and wrote a master thesis about 'the power of circus'. She is now responsible for some social projects in the neighbourhood in Circusplaneet.

Integral Circus Laboratory - Circus as a urban development agent. Miguel Manzano Olmos – Donyet Ardit, Alicante, Spagna

Laboratorio Integral de Circo is my final project at the Architecture School of Alicante (Spain). In it, I propose the construction of a circus school in one of the most impoverished districts of the city of Alicante, using the tools of the social circus as an urban catalyst.

The project is divided into three phases: colonisation of an abandoned space in the neighbourhood (1), an invitation to neighbours (2) and, finally, consolidation (3). The phases are not measured in time but rather in the integration of the project in the neighbourhood. The participative construction of the circus space becomes a symbol of urban identity, where the shape of the building itself is conditioned by the changing needs of the pedagogical project.

Throughout the construction process, the school of circus is being consolidated in which, in addition to teaching circus, we will focus on the manufacture of materials and circus devices: mats, hoops, juggling, trampolines, etc.. The aim of this is to create an official professional training in the production of circus elements: design, manufacture and sale. Generating a light but innovative industry in the neighbourhood, thus giving a new job opportunity to the students themselves, in the medium term.

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Miguel Manzano Olmos, from the Alicante circus association "Donyet Ardit". Acrobat and Architect. Trainer in the socio-educational circus school of my city, I try to carry out this project in the neighbourhood where we have been working with Donyet Ardit for five years. I have also worked as a circus artist in different companies since 2010.

Harmony Through Handsprings: Studying Resilience in the Everyday World of Social Circus. Charlotte Byram - Circus Harmony, St. Louis, USA

Inherent in its daily activities, the circus arts have a unique appeal and utility for youth at-risk of violent lifestyles. Consequently, social circus is an incredible tool to promote youth resilience and prevent youth from engaging in lifestyles characterized by violent behaviors. More than just “keeping kids off the streets” or expending energy, this play-to-purpose transformative process can literally change the course of a young person’s life.

Based on the Positive Youth Development approach, Circus Resilience Theory is characterized by three pathways: future aspirations, supportive relationships, and community citizenship.

- Supportive relationships is about having role models in addition to building safe and encouraging peer networks. These relationships are a source of emotional and instrumental support for youth, and can provide the necessary guidance to secure employment or apply to university.
- Future aspirations includes a youth’s optimism about the future, expected educational achievement or careers, and the ability to set and reach useful goals. Due to difficult environments, many at-risk youth have low expectations for their futures; through incremental skill progressions, youth build self-efficacy and confidence to transcend their status quo.
- Focusing on an individual’s unique contributions to the success of a team, the community citizenship pathway develops a youth’s sense of responsibility. The youth’s voice is heard and respected, empowering them to give back to their community and create their own social change.

Successful evaluation in a social circus context can be challenging and seem overwhelming. Outcomes, such as the three pathways of the Circus Resilience Theory, often develop simultaneously, exhibit a dose-response relationship, and are strongly interdependent. These characteristics have consequences for undertaking research, as the methods employed will overlap and interpretation of results will consist of fluid impressions, rather than discrete categories.

Acknowledging the complicated nature of measuring impact in social circus, Ms. Byram will present the Circus Resilience Theory and how she is applying it at Circus Harmony in St. Louis, Missouri. The brief presentation will be followed by a collaborative discussion on developing best practices for effective, respectful and cost-efficient evaluation for social circuses.

Charlotte Byram is the Operations Manager and Evaluation Specialist at Circus Harmony. An early adopter of evaluation methods, Circus Harmony has had its fair share of research revelations and challenges, and was one of the eight social circuses participating in the first study of American social circus on Social and Emotional Learning carried out by the Weikart Center.

Panel: circus and new communities of life and work

New circuses. Salvatore Frasca, Side

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Side kunst-cirque is a travelling circus-theatre born from the will of a few international artists united under the hat of the My!Laika company. All its members come from different countries and meet under a tent which welcomes their creations and which is also a travelling place. In a Foucauldian interpretation circus is a 'non-space', a perfect heterotopia which moves attracting artists, audiences, ideas, shows, concerts, parties. Side is a completely self-produced circus, alternative, independent. We have all worked in the streets and theatres of Europe for years, collecting funds, awards, and acknowledgement for our creations but circus is a different discourse. We wanted and we had to start from the beginning.

We had to skip years and years of traditions that had no meaning for us. We had to restart from the very first, stunning circus, the most inspiring and powerful. To that circus before any tradition, made of artists of different origins and background who – as somebody cleverly wrote – met underneath a tent fleeing common sense to 'wildely countersing' odern society. We wanted to go back to the zero year to rewrite a pathway. Ours. We became like cavemen: without moral constructions, without pre-constituted forms, without any traditions. In this sense the freedom of doing and creating or simply exploring the universe on our spaceship is huge.

Salvatore Frasca attends the Fine Arts Academy in Florence, the Guzai circus schools in Moscow and the circus school in Kiev, and the High Circus School Le Lido in Toulouse. In 2000 he founds the Bengala company, which performs more than 500 times in Italy. In 2010 he founds the My!Laika company, which wins Jeunes Talents de Cirque 2010. He is a rigger, ringmaster and showman in cabarets and performances, an artistic director for different projects in Italy and abroad, among which Città del Circo in Bologna.

Island Circus. Steve Cousins - Let's circus, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK

Let's Circus is the Circus that runs away to join you! It has become the circus that is the first to come to small island communities this steams from Steve's long held interest in the remote islands off the coast of Scotland. He is interested not only in the landscape but also the communities of artists he travels with and the communities he brings the circus to. Steve will share his experiences of this special type of circus adventure.

Steve Cousins graduated as a geologist in Australia, and then in 2000 was a science educator and in 2001 a fire performer in Scotland with tePooka, an arts education charity. With Helen Averley he Co-founded Let's Circus in 2008, working in Australia, Kenya and UK. In 2009 they co-founded Circus Central, a youth and community circus school, in Newcastle upon Tyne, and was a lead in the Five Ring Circus youth project. He worked as a street performer and social circus teacher. With Let's Circus he focusses on his work on and off stage (ring master and eccentric acts) taking the circus to communities (as remote as possible) as well as agent and producer for circus and street events.

Casa Circostanza: the home of social circus as incubator of community and relations. Giovanna Sfriso - Fondazione Uniti per Crescere Insieme, Torino

5 years of activity, more than 1000 recipients every year, seven involved operators, two circus peer educators, two national voluntary service participants, volunteers, partners, institutions, funders, and a whole community who revolves around us! Casa Circostanza is a real incubator of community and social relations, a dream network turned real thanks to the power of social circus.

Day trips, alternatives to detention, solidarity, trainings, workshops: pathways in which the circus turns social, becoming a common denominator of relations weaved with many different realities, creating an

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invisible but strong network between the different actors of the social world that every day work locally to promote the wellbeing and participation of youth, children and young adults.

Giovanna Sfriso is a social educator and cultural animator, expert of theatre techniques, social animation, international cooperation and world education. She worked abroad with unaccompanied minors and asylum seekers. She works as an educator with homeless and disable people. Since 2015 she is a social circus operator for UCI Foundation in Turin, where she organises and realises social circus workshops with communities, day care centres, youth centres, schools. She is responsible for the middle schools project in Porta Palazzo.

The SLIP project. Davide Fontana - SLIP, Torino

Torino Slip project is a constantly evolving project. It started as a circus training space, then became an association which grew, developed and moved to a new space almost two years ago. Slip is also a community, a group of people who live together and build relationships beyond the circus arts.

Circus and community, circus is a community in itself, especially if we think about traditional circus. Here in the Association's carpark we observe what happens, we do not have models, nor examples, we get inspiration from what we like and have seen, mixing different experiences. Our associative life unfolds in camper vans, volunteering within the circus building and searching for beauty, art beyond art, because circus is a tool rather than a goal.

Panel: Circus as a community catalyst through the school system

Fun-loving teachers. Giuseppe Porcu, Fumachenduma, Cuneo.

It is easy to make children play. Making adults rediscover the wonder of playing is revolutionary. A training involving 100 primary and secondary school teachers for a "more effective school". A project which introduces the pedagogical methodologies of educational circus to 14 schools and 58 class groups in 6 different cities.

The impact of Circo Corsaro in a middle school in Scampia. Maria Teresa Cesaroni – AltroCirco

Workshops

1. CircoMobile: techniques for outreach circus projects. Luca Marzini - Fondazione Uniti per Crescere Insieme, Torino

Joining outreach circus projects with circus techniques enables to raise the interest of those who live the street in the most diverse ways: children who play accompanied by their parents and grandparents, as well as unaccompanied minors!

Taking social circus to the street, human relations amazingly become more fluid, positive and playful even in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The street thus become a catalyst of change, not only for the individual but for the whole community. With the Circus, the street for a moment becomes a protected place, in which answers can be found to the search for positive and constructive incentives that every kid – more or less explicitly - engages with.

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Luca Marzini, social circus educator since 2005, is vice-coordinator in Casa Circostanza, where Foundation Uniti per Crescere Insieme operates. He coordinates projects for young children and is the referent for the project Circomobile: outreach projects in disadvantaged areas of Turin. He trains clowns who volunteer in hospitals for Association Viviamo in Positivo and teaches in the School for Circus and Theatre Educators within the Università Popolare del Sociale.

Methodologies for community circus research. Helen Averley - Let's circus, Newcastle, UK

Helen who is co-founder of the Circus Research Network (Britain & Ireland) will present the methodology of her two funded social history research projects which she designed and delivered. The methodology includes not only the research process but also various way of disseminating the results.

– “The Family La Bonche... Who Are We?” 2013/14

This original and acclaimed Youth Heritage project was a year-long and involved 90+ young people from the Five Ring Circus, based in the North East of England. The project focused on the history of circus of the region. Using circus archives and oral history – it resulted in a book, website, performance and exhibition.

– “War Circus” 2016/7

This original project was focused on a small community research group of adults. It involved research in archives, online, biographic accounts and oral histories. – it results are shared in a book and website.

3. Practical inputs for circus workshops with teachers. Giuseppe Porcu – Fumachenduma

4. Look at me workshop. Steven Desanghere - Circusplaneet, Ghent, Belgium

Steven Desanghere presents the Italian translation of his booklet “Look at me” in a participatory workshop. What are some of the successful elements of the circus approach? What can the rest of youth work, education systems and society learn from our good practices?