



Dear reader,

Thank you for downloading and reading our dossier.
Consider this a mood-board where we try to paint you a picture of our project **BRENDA**.

We are Gwendalyne and Sonia. Two women. Dutch and Spanish. In 2020 we decided to create a performance for children and their family. Finally we were able to meet, create and write our ideas in October this year. The outcome of this residency is this dossier.

Over the next pages we will give you an impression of our project.
What is our inspiration? What is the idea? What or who is **BRENDA**?
Followed by a short description about us personally and our shared history.
We close the dossier with a summary of what we need to realize **BRENDA**, our contact details and a visual mood-board.

We hope you will find our project appealing to co-produce **BRENDA**.

With kind regards,

Sonia and Gwendalyne

Why 'BRENDA'

S: "I went to the museum!"
G: "How was it?"
S: "Beyond..."
G: "I'm jealous"
S: "And I saw a painting about our countries."
G: "Which one?!?"
S: "The seige of Brenda"
G: "The siege of what?"
S: "Brenda."
G: "Brenda?!?"
S: "Yes..."
G: "..."
S: "It was a battle in Holland."
G: "Ah! BREDA!"
They laugh

BRENDA

INSPIRATION

Our starting point was the exhibition Velázquez, Rembrandt and Vermeer *Parallel Visions* at the Museo Nacional Del Prado in Madrid. This exhibition focussed on the similarity between Spanish and Dutch painters (and their works) in the 17th century. Traditionally, in art history literature, there has been more attention given to what separates artists of different European nations than in what unites them. *Parallel Visions* made it very clear that this ‘uniqueness’ has been somewhat exaggerated.

Sonia visited the exhibition and rediscovered *The siege of Breda*. Suddenly this painting of Velázquez became food for thoughts and a true inspiration. Two years later, we finally meet in front of the painting.

TRAIN OF THOUGHT

And we talk about the painting. We are amazed by the humanity and respect between Spinola and Nassau during a war. If we hadn’t known the title or history of this masterpiece we could have interpreted it differently. Even the opposite. Nassau receiving, with gratitude, a key from the friendly Spinola.

We discuss the differences between the Dutch and the Spanish. But does it show? We only see men. Perhaps there was a big distinction between the two cultures in the 17th century. But what about now?

What makes you ‘Spanish’ and you ‘Dutch’?
Language?
Habits?
Food?

Is there such a thing as ‘culture’? Do we still think in terms of ‘culture’? We live in a time where borders are becoming non-existent because of social media and the internet. A time when awareness of

LGBTQAI+, black lives matter, climate change, disease, ... brings us closer together as human beings. A new nationality is emerging. The nationality of ‘us’. And ‘us’ is who he/she wants to be. Herself.

HOME

Being yourself is the greatest luxury there is. Both of us have experienced the feeling of being lost. Gwendalyne is Dutch but lives in Belgium, Sonia is Spanish but finds herself moving around the world. We became foreigners leaving our countries, but remained foreigners when we returned home.

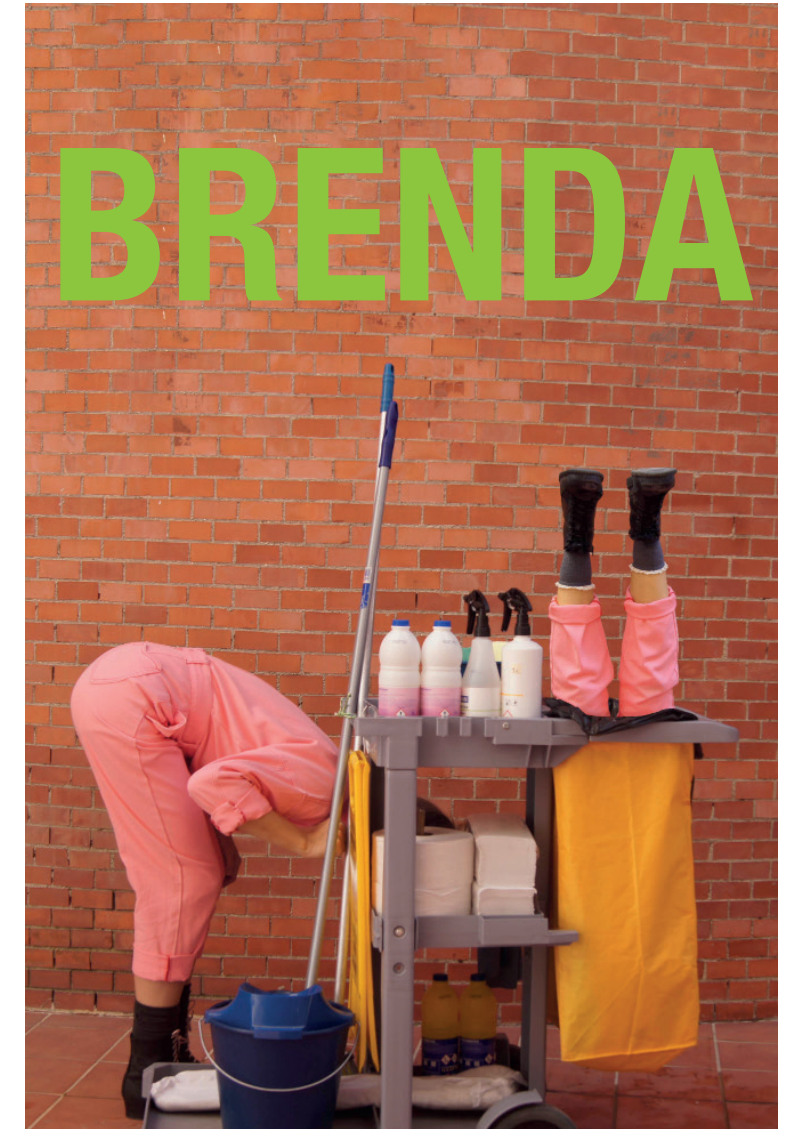
‘Home’ became a feeling instead of a place. Both of us had to create ‘home’ wherever we went. And the feeling of being ‘home’ was where we were able to be our true selves.

THE STORYLINE

In front of the *The siege of Breda* two cleaners meet. For one of them, it’s the first day of her dream job. Growing old, she had only one goal: to work at the museum Del Prado as a cleaner. She used to stare at all the employees who emerged by closing time. She always wanted to be one of them. Cleaning those beautiful halls, being able to look at all the paintings and wear the uniform. Her mentor is extremely experienced and lives to work but somewhere along the line forgot to live.

BRENDA

Pursues a comic physical theater play
Wants to excite the whole family
Wants to be understood in all languages
Reflects on what unites and separates us culturally, linguistically, politically
Wants to be human
Wants to play, learn, laugh, explore borders
Wants to come home





Gwendalyne van Erp (Groningen, The Netherlands, 1984)

Gwen(dalyne) graduated at the drama-school of Maastricht (NL) as a director and teacher of drama in 2010.

After graduating she moved to Antwerp (BE) and founded her own theatre company 'ROESTgroep'. A collective with a core group of two head-creators/performers, three musicians and a costume designer. The group focusses on location-based theatre and tries to bring theatre to the people instead of the other way around.

Complementing her love for socially-inspired projects, she focuses on children, performing in different productions and working as a clown in Belgian hospitals. In '20/'21 she wrote and played in her own production *STRUIS*, inspired by our changing climate.

Since 2014 she has been walking the path of the clown, an incredibly fascinating world in which her enthusiasm and love for physical play can thrive. The clown gives her answers, puts things in perspective, comforts her and therefore others.

Her journey of finding and becoming the clown has just begun. The road ahead is far and long. But this doesn't bother Gwendalyne. She wants to learn. Explore. Discover. She needs to be curious. She even believes, that once you stop learning, you stop.

BRENDA is the smell of peanutbutter
BRENDA is cycling against wind and dewdrops
BRENDA is to read the last sentence of a new book

Sonia Ruiz Parra (La Mancha, Spain, 1984)

After studying Hispanic Philology at the University of Castilla-La Mancha and the University of Granada, and obtaining the Diploma of Advanced Studies with a work on the theatre of exile, Sonia graduated from the International School of Theatre Mar Navarro & Andrés Hernández (Lecoq's pedagogy) in Madrid in 2017. She and other partners of the same school founded the physical theatre company 'La Sombra del Oso'. Their main focus is masks, play of the chorus and exchange processes around the world.

For three years she has been taking theatre courses in different countries, especially in the city of Moscow where she lived for two years. In addition to her own research as an actress she has taught different theatre workshops in Russia, Slovakia and Spain.

For Sonia theatre is an artisanal art. She builds her own masks and gives great importance to silence and working with people. With *La sombra del Oso* she created her own solo *Más de La más fuerte*, with texts of Strindberg and Calasso.

Now she is focused on different projects of the company like Another *Theatre's Moon*, *EGO. Bofetón mal encajado o todos tienen algo que no supieron ver* and, of course, **BRENDA**.

BRENDA is her worn out blue sweater and Momo
BRENDA is the shadows of a tree on the wall
BRENDA is a woollen carpet





GWEN&SON

Gwendalyne and Sonia met for the first time in Belgium during a slapstick workshop where they explored the style of performance synonymous with artists such as Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd and Charles Chaplin. They immediately felt a strong connection through a common language based on the physicality of the body rather than on words.

Just a few weeks later Sonia visited the exhibition Parallel Visions. Whilst standing in front of Velázquez' and Ver-meers' paintings she got the premonition that this newly acquired friendship could grow into more, into something spectacular.

A year later during a mask-training workshop in Paris, Gwen and Sonia decided to continue their research in physical theatre. However shortly afterwards a pandemic took over the world and their encounters where limited to online meetings only. The idea of creating something together had taken hold of them and so they decided to take a leap of faith and organised their own artistic residency in Madrid last October (2021). During the daytime they rehearsed and researched Spanish culture. In the evening they attended the workshop 'language of gesture' given by Fleur van den Berg who they later asked to be their coach.

And, of course, above all things, to visit Del Prado Museum together and stand in front of *The siege of Breda*.

BRENDA wants to come to Belgium
and is looking for a place to
REHEARS
SLEEP
PLAY (in 2023)
In the period of Jan. / Feb. 2022

BRENDA wants to come to Holland
and is looking for a place to
REHEARS
SLEEP
PLAY (in 2023)
In the period of May / Jun. 2022

BRENDA wants to come back to Spain
and is looking for a place to
REHEARS
SLEEP
PLAY
In the period of Oct. / Nov. 2022

BRENDA needs financial support for
(among others)
Production (set-design, costumes, props, ...)
Communication (graphic design, print, PR, ...)
Performance (wages, coaching, workshop, ...)
Documentation (pictures, registration, ...)
...

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