

# TOOLS+ACTION FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORTS COMBINED 2023 - 2024

Rotterdam, 3 October 2025

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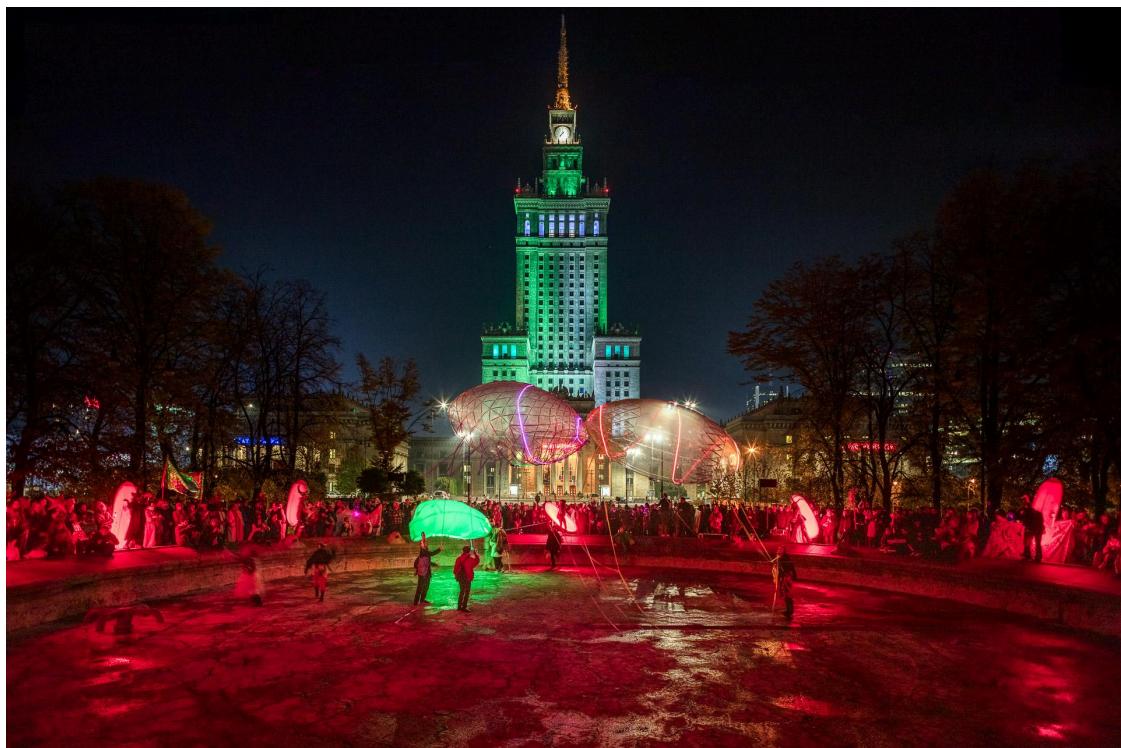
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Above: Impressions from the Delegation of Slippery Affairs, Tools for Action x MSN Warsaw, Photo Pat Mic.

# 1. About the T4A Foundation

## 1.1 Background

Tools for Action (T4A) was founded in 2019 as a formal framework supporting the long-term artistic, educational, and activist practice initiated by artist **Bambi Benkő van Balen**. Since 2012, T4A has united artists, educators, and activists to develop playful and socially critical interventions, often using inflatable tools in public space. These objects are deliberately attention-grabbing—both literally and symbolically—and serve as platforms for participatory activism and artistic exploration.

T4A initially operated internationally from Berlin, then relocated to Rotterdam in 2020. The Foundation provides professional governance, administrative oversight, and strategic support, allowing T4A to expand its reach while maintaining its experimental and activist ethos.

## 1.2 Statutory Objectives

The Foundation's statutory objectives include:

- **EXPERIMENT:** develop, research, and share socially critical art
- **COOPERATION:** provide a platform for interdisciplinary and international collaboration
- **ENGAGEMENT:** invite public participation and alternative social engagement
- **ACTIVATION:** create space—physical and imaginative—for collective action
- **DISCUSSION:** stimulate public debate on human rights, social justice, and ecological issues
- **QUESTIONING:** challenge social norms and power structures from intersectional and queer perspectives
- **KNOWLEDGE:** gather, exchange, and disseminate artistic, pedagogical, and activist insights



Above: Nausikaa El Mecky (left) Marc Herbst (right)

## 2. Board & Governance

### 2.1 New Positions in Board Structure

In 2024, the Foundation bid farewell to two board members:

- **Matthieu Charles**, Chair, stepped down due to family commitments.
- **Nóra Kardos**, Secretary, concluded her three-year term to pursue a master's in theater production at the University of Utrecht.

We thank both for their engagement, guidance, and contribution to T4A's development.

New appointments:

- **Nausikaa El Mecky (Chair)**: Tenure-track professor in art history at Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, founder of Rebellious Teaching, and specialist in "dangerous images." Nausikaa brings expertise in alternative pedagogy, research, and the intersection of academic and artistic practice.
- **Marc Herbst (Secretary)**: Artist, researcher, editor, and co-founder of the *Journal of Aesthetics & Protest*. Marc splits his time between Italy and Germany, focusing on the relationship between dreams and global power structures. His experience in climate justice and publishing strengthens T4A's mission to document and disseminate its open-source methods.

### 2.2 Governance Developments

The Foundation enhanced professional governance by:

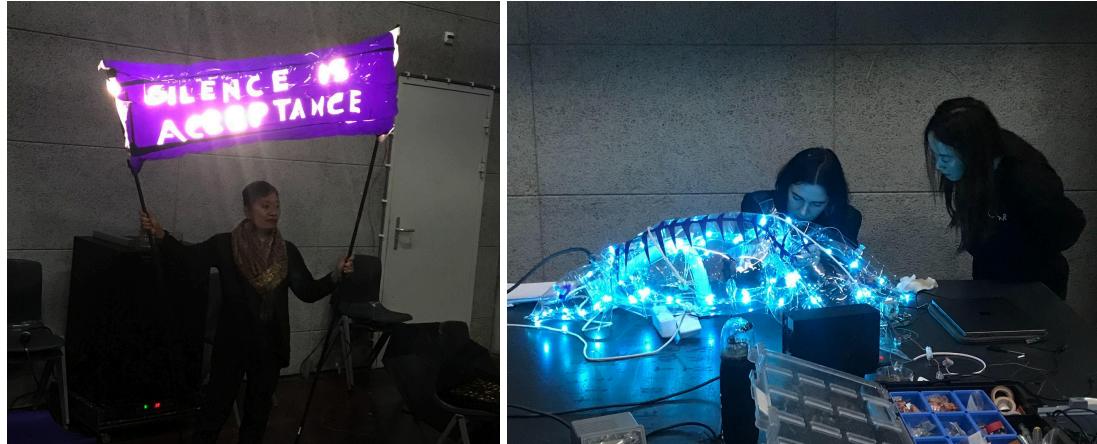
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities for the board and project teams
- Introducing fair-practice agreements for collaborators
- Ensuring transparency in budgeting, project selection, and reporting

### 3. Activities Categorized by Type

#### 3.1 Public Action

*Interventions designed to engage public space directly, often with political, ecological, or civic objectives.*

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*Left: Mitchy Saturay with illuminated inflatable banner reading Silence is Acceptance.  
Right: illuminated fish head piece, electronic soldering by Christy Westhoven.*

##### 3.1.1 Rainbow Warriors – Solid in the Streets, Fluid in the Skies

*BAK Utrecht, Sint Maarten Parade, October–November 2023*

The political arts space BAK Utrecht invited Tools for Action to develop an artistic intervention for the annual Sint Maarten Parade, in collaboration with Filipino, Caribbean, queer, and other communities in Utrecht. The parade is a communal event commemorating Saint Maarten, yet it is criticized for not including diversity.

Tools for Action designed a 7-day training cycle that included inflatable light-and-sound sculptures and choreographies, named *Rainbow Warriors – Solid in the Streets, Fluid in the Skies* after Marlon Lacsamana's essay on SOGIE (sexual orientation, gender identity and expression) diversity among frontline fighters in the Philippines. Participants explored gender fluid solidarities and cross-cultural engagement.

Research lectures complemented the workshops, including Florian Göttke's work on effigies, resonating with Jun Saturay's personal experiences in the Philippines. Participants created inflatable costumes, banners with messages such as *Silence is Acceptance* (referencing Palestine), and a large octopus sculpture symbolizing tentacular connections, capitalism, and community solidarity. The parade reached 17,000 spectators, providing a model for intergenerational and transcultural organizing.

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Het protest tegen de geplande brug tussen De Esch en Veranda op de trappen van het stadhuis aan de Coolsingel. © Jan de Groot  
<https://www.ad.nl/rotterdam/protest-met-theater-tegen-komst-brug-zolang-er-geen-paal-de-grond-in-gaat-is-er-nog-hoop-a399e691/23802540/>

Boven: Straat Theater De Esch op de trappen van Rotterdamse Stadhuis. Foto Jan de Groot | Algemeen Dagblad, 28.11.2023

### 3.1.2 De Esch – Protest Action

*Rotterdam Municipality, 2023*

Tools for Action participated in a protest against the construction of a bridge that threatened the De Esch green area. Using participatory theater and a swarm bike ride, participants highlighted procedural flaws in municipal decision-making and mobilized local citizens to advocate for their environment. Photographs of the action appeared in national newspapers.



Above: Banner intervention in front of Arti & Amicitiae for exhibition opening *DaDa in times of Dataism*, Amsterdam, 20 October 2023.

### 3.1.3 Intervention at Arti & Amicitiae – DaDa in Times of Dataism

*Amsterdam, October 2023*

During the exhibition opening coinciding with the Gaza invasion, Tools for Action created a banner reading *Silence is Acceptance. Stop Genocide. Palestinian Freedom = Jewish Freedom* in solidarity and critique. The banner provoked reflection and dialogue within the arts community, highlighting anti-war and Dadaist legacies and questioning the ‘neutral role’ of institutions within the global political crisis.

## 3.2 Exhibitions and Institutional Critique

Projects focused on artistic display, performance, and critical engagement within curated or institutional settings. Institutional critique understood not to break down the institution, but to strengthen it.



Above: Impressions from the Delegation of Slippery Affairs, Tools for Action x MSN Warsaw, Photo Pat Mic.

### 3.2.1 Delegation of Slippery Affairs

Museum of Modern Art Warsaw, 2024

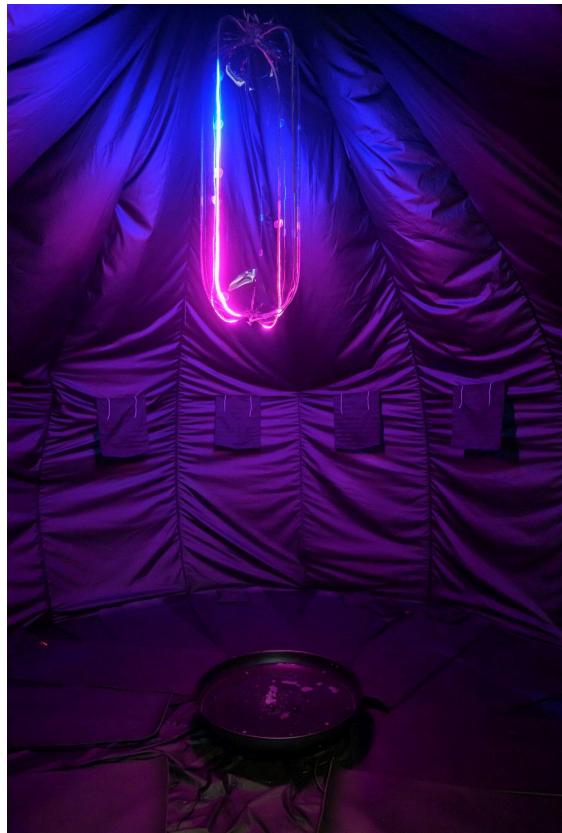
For the inauguration of the new Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Tools for Action, guided by Bambi Benkö and nat skoczylas, developed the performance *Delegation of Slippery Affairs (Delegacja Śliskich Spraw)*. The project took the form of a nomadic rave — a witchy celebration and rite of passage between the museum's old home on ul. Pańska and its new "white cube" building at Marszałkowska 103 in the heart of Warsaw.

Invited by curator Szymon Maliborski, Tools for Action created a counter-proposal to the official propaganda marches once held on Plac Defilad (Parade Square). Drawing on the history of socialist-era processions and the notion of "artist delegations", the performance

reimagined the language of official representation with ironic distance and replaced ceremonial seriousness with playful slipperiness, finding joy behind institutional formality. Inspired by Stefano Harney and Fred Moten's concept of the *Undercommons*, the artists sought to redistribute access and challenge institutional gatekeeping.

An open call invited artists, cultural workers, and amateurs to bring their works to the old museum. These were officially registered, paraded through the city, and exhibited at the inauguration to then become officially included in the museum's "inauguration collection", symbolically opening the institution to previously excluded voices.

A five-metre illuminated pickle, conceived as a symbol of *Slavic Futurism* and built by volunteers in Warsaw under guidance of Tools for Action, became the parade's mascot. Artists **Lea Asche** and **Beciu Cyruchin** designed "bewitched" costumes, while **Jagna Nawrocka** choreographed movements inspired by them. A sixty-member queer and intergenerational choir led by **Gaba Kunert**, music by **DJ Asidron**, and a ritual performance by **nyio kunt** transformed the event into a raucous, slippery spectacle that snaked from the museums studio to the Palace of Science and Culture to finally enter the museum's new home. Around 500 people participated in the parade and 10 000 people came to the inauguration of the museum. The performance was livestreamed on the museum's website.



Above: Dream Chapel installation at entry hall of Museum Helmond

### 3.2.2 Resilient Rebels – Museum Helmond

*Helmond, 2023*

As part of *Resilient Rebels*, Tools for Action presented the movie *Barricade Ballet* and developed the new work *Dream Chapel*, a dream installation in the entry hall of the museum, incantated with Artemisia herbs from De Esch. Visitors could immerse themselves in a 10 min guided dream journey with a music composition by OTION.

As a museum side program, Tools for Action provided school workshops including choreographies with inflatable cubes, filmed with drones, emphasizing participatory engagement and collective action.

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Above: Dream Space 03 in park in Leipzig

### 3.2.3 Dream Space 03 – Leipzig

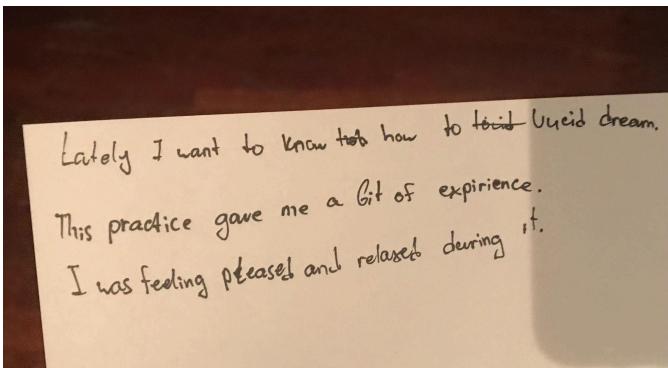
*Kunstverein Leipzig, 2023*

For the exhibition *On Singularities & Common Grounds*, Tools for Action developed a dream installation in a public park. In collaboration with Kassem Mosse, a live sound performance accompanied a drum-light device that translated vibrations into electrical signals for the lights, creating immersive “ancient-futurist” dream devices.

### 3.3 Educational Activities

Activities emphasizing pedagogy, skills development, and participatory learning.

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Above: impression of dream workshop at BAK Young Fellows.

#### 3.3.1 Pedagogical Dream Workshops – High School Students

BAK Young Fellows & IVKO Amsterdam, 2024

Students explored dreams using Waking Dream Therapy-inspired techniques. Sessions concluded with drawings and writings, fostering dialogue, trust, and reflection. Responses varied, highlighting the importance of safety and vulnerability in the classroom.

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Above: Becoming Other - embodied intervention at CCA Radius Delft

#### 3.3.2 Becoming Other – CCA Radius Delft

Delft, 2024

For *The Desire for a Donut Economy*, primary school students embodied lichen and isopods. Lichen costumes required slow coordinated movement, while isopods crawled on the ground, engaging with exhibition artworks. Tools for Action (Milo van Riet, Branco van Gelder, Bambi Benko) designed the costumes and a tour engaging with the works on display. A team of arts educators implemented the tours. Approximately 50 classes participated, exploring cooperation, ecology, and temporality.



*Above: Floating Assembly - don't forget your swimwear parade, Tools for Action workshop, Breda, 2023*

### **3.3.3 Floating Assembly – Don’t Forget Your Swimwear**

*Graphic Matters, Breda, August 2023*

Participants attended a three-day masterclass on the basics of inflatable-making, learning techniques from household and industrial materials to create giant floating objects. The workshop culminated in a water-based parade, testing these creations as potential tools for direct action blockades. Artists like Nazgol Sobhani and others created dreamlike floating sculptures. The event highlighted both experimental making and collective artistic collaboration.

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### **3.3.4 Training Cycles in preparation of actions (Rainbow Warriors (3.1.1) / Delegation of Slippery Affairs (3.2.1) / Floating Assembly (3.3.3))**

- Multi-day workshops integrating fabrication, choreography, and political discussion
- Developed skills for public engagement and creative activism in real-world contexts

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## 3.4 Research & Development

Projects focused on experiment, research and development.

### 3.4.1 The Word for World is Forest – Dream Residency

Elias 2069, Slovenia, August 2024



Above: Suspended encampment in the forest, early morning as part of a dream research residency Slovenia 2024. Foto Bambi Benkó

Inspired by Ursula K. Le Guin's sci-fi work *The Word for World is Forest*, the residency took place at Elias 2069, an institute for dreaming founded by Mala Kline and Gasper Puntar in Mohorje, a village school in between the mountains and forests. Participants suspended tents and cargo nets above a creek, forming a shared "dream matrix" where sound, touch, and movement intertwined with the rhythms of the forest.

Soundscapes by resident musician Conrad Hornung layered acoustic and electronic instruments to echo natural forest sounds, deepening meditative states and supporting individual and collective reflection. Daily dreamwork involved participants sharing dreams through a four-step method derived from the School of Images: contextual inquiry, pattern recognition, interpretive exploration, and gentle revisititation via hypnosis. This method encouraged safe exploration of unconscious material and its integration into waking life.

Participants described the residency as a rare opportunity to hold space for one another's dreams and griefs, fostering attentiveness, care, and collaborative reflection. The residency also explored how such practices could evolve into larger-scale gatherings while emphasizing sensitivity to delicate forest ecosystems.

**Funding:** Culture Moves Europe

**Participants:** Christy Westhoven, Conrad Hornung, Csilla Hódi, Ferry Chrispijn, Tomi Hillfiger

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### **3.3.3 ULEX Training – Regenerative Activism**

*Eroles, Spain, 2023*

Bambi Benkő attended training integrating participatory games, somatic techniques, meditation, and group dynamics. Insights were applied to Tools for Action's methodology, linking inner reflection to collective activism.

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## **3.4 Technical & Fabrication Developments**

- Acquisition of ultrasonic welding machine (2023)
- Enabled advanced inflatable and wearable sculpture fabrication
- Supported workshops, parades, and public interventions

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## **4. Grants & Support**

T4A acknowledges the generous support of:

- Culture Moves Europe
- DOEN Foundation
- BAK Utrecht
- Graphic Matters
- Museum Helmond
- Kunstverein Leipzig
- Museum of Modern Art Warsaw
- CCA Radius Delft
- Local municipalities, schools, and community partners

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## 5. Mission and Impact (2023–2024)

### EXPERIMENT

- Pilot projects spanning immersive dream residencies, street interventions, and exhibition-based practices

### COOPERATION

- International, cross-disciplinary collaboration with artists, educators, activists, and communities

### ENGAGEMENT

- Participatory workshops, public parades, and school-based dream exercises
- Created opportunities for young people to engage with activism and creative expression

### ACTIVATION

- Transformative public performances and workshops encouraged collective imagination and embodied action

### DISCUSSION

- Projects addressed Palestine, urban ecology, gender, and intersectional justice
- Stimulated dialogue within institutions, public audiences, and media

### QUESTIONING

- Actions challenged institutional authority, patriarchy, and systemic exclusion
- Projects emphasized queer, ecological, and intersectional perspectives

### KNOWLEDGE

- Workshops, training cycles, open studios, and online documentation distributed critical skills and insights
- T4A integrated learning from regenerative activism and dream-based methodologies into creative activism

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## 6. Financial Report

See attached in a separate link.

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### Contact

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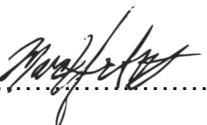
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### Signed:

**Chair**  
Dr. Nausikaa El Mecky

  
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**Secretary**  
Dr. Marc Herbst

  
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**Treasurer**  
Christine Kappé

  
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