



Temporary Information Center, section Watou

Everything is Four

Various Artists

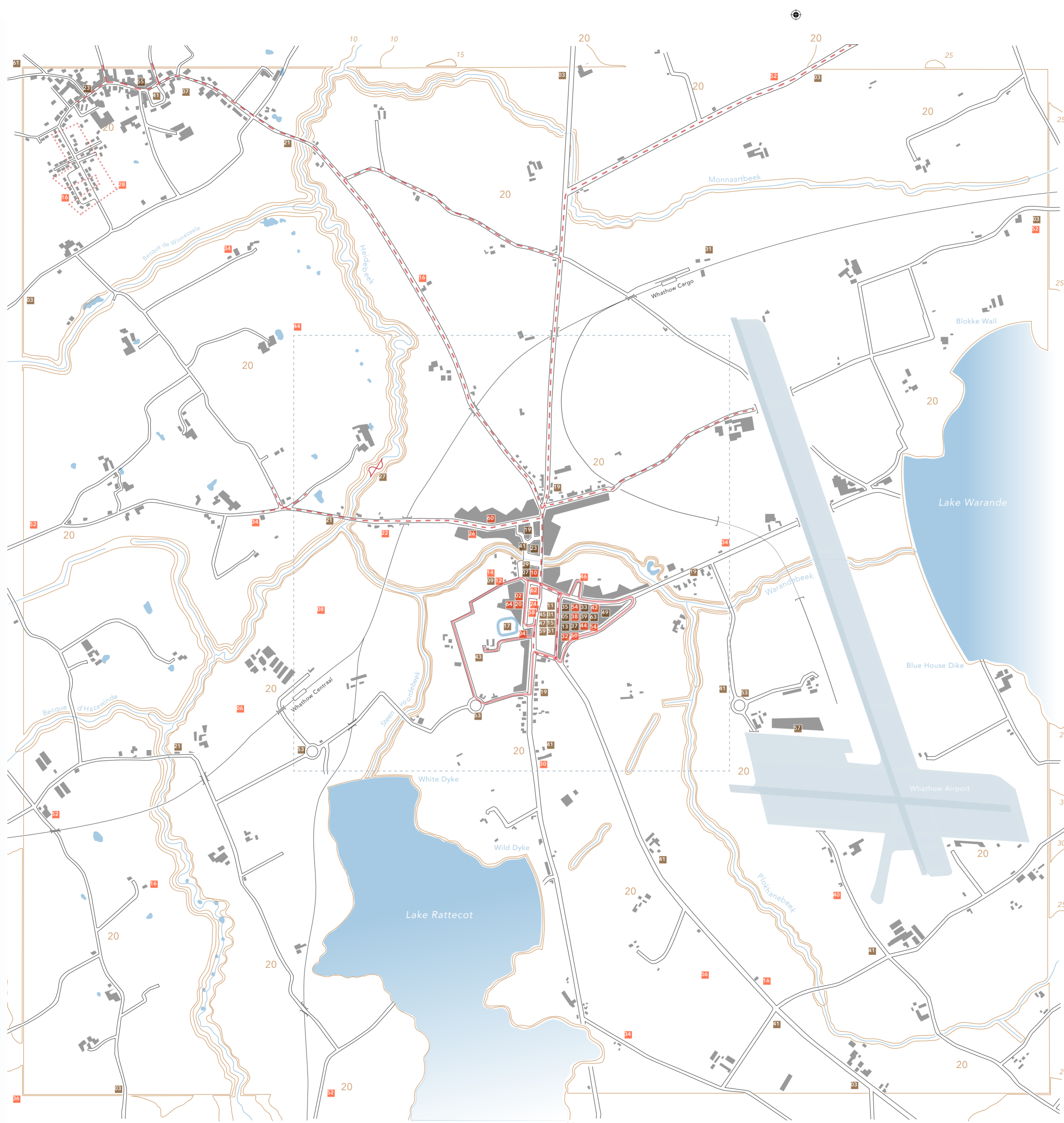
Ais for...

Watou 2024 - June 28 till August 31
Closed on Sundays

Temporary Information Center - Section Watou is the twelfth section of the T.I.C. founded by Jakob Van den Broucke and Kasper Demeulemeester, since they founded the Department Meerhout in the summer of 2020. The Temporary Information Center can be described as a dynamic and synergetic thinking space where accumulation of knowledge and aesthetic production can coincide. The results of this open artistic form of work are shared in the form of exhibitions and publications.

Various Artists is a long-term narrative art project centered around a fictional artists' collective developed by Trudo Engels. Rooted in autobiographical practice, it explores an artist's doubts and identity crisis from the 1990s onwards. Embracing the essence of "fiction" as an integral part of the collective's DNA, Art-Fiction and the exploration of the "imaginal" have become significant practices. Notable projects such as Kunst & Zwalm 2021 in 2019, Belindia in 2021, and Inonde-Moi in 2022 showcase Various Artists' commitment to presenting works that reflect the current times, where reality often supersedes fantasy at multiple levels of society.

@artexchange_watou24



Everything is Four

In 2024, the organization of the annual arts festival in Watou became part of a collective and horizontal process for the first time. This organization took on the name **Temporary Information Center, section Watou**. After the 2023 edition, an open call was launched addressed to local residents, artists, non-artists, writers of short texts, writers of long texts and anyone else who felt called. All interested parties were brought together and a group of 44 members, including individuals and collectives, was formed. Each human member of the group also applied in the name of a non-human entity from Watou. Thus, animals, watercourses, plants and social constructs were also given their place in the organization, which thus consisted of 88 members represented by 44 people.

In the period between October 2023 and June 2024, the group met four times. In these meetings, the main decisions regarding the organization of the festival were made through collective compromise.

In the first meeting it was decided to create 4 workgroups: Money; Programming; Infrastructure; Embedding; Production and Decentralization and Sustainability. These four specific workgroups were made up of varying formations of members who were all part of the group of 88.

Instead of publishing a single catalog, a pluralistic form of information flow was chosen this year. The choice was made to un-bind. Several publications emerged from the various contributions to the festival and can be consulted in [1] Art Exchange. The publications include texts and images related to the arts festival, appear both online and offline, and include reports of meetings and e-mail correspondences, among others. These publications led to a series of multiples that can be exchanged in [1] Art Exchange. Practical info about the festival was summarized on a free map, which you now hold in your hands.

A direct consequence of this reform of the arts festival was the inclusion of non-art works by the programming workgroup. A second important consequence was that at the last meeting the workgroup on sustainability proposed that the way of self-organization that had led to this edition of the festival be applied to the organization of the village from September 2024 onward, to continue the experiment.

A is for... (Whathow 24)

Arts festivals might be the direct descendants of long-gone village festivals, where dignitaries paraded with giants, wild animals, majorettes, drum bands and more. Local farmers and artisans also joined in, selling their wares to an elated public. Over the decades and centuries, traditions like pigeon racing faded away, farmers were undermined by agribusiness and artisans became extinct.

With "A is for..." Various Artists imagines a future in which the Whathow festival unfolds in an undefined time and an imaginary environment. In their trademark registered chaotic manner, they amalgamate ideas and imagery to challenge the "festival" algorithm. Are we not also subjected to the rampant market economic forces pervasive in the arts sector? Have we become overly fixated on consumption and audience reach?

"A is for..." challenges us to rethink the value we place on art and urges us to reclaim the intrinsic value of creativity beyond its marketability. It calls for a renewed appreciation of art's ability to transcend commercial constraints and forge deep emotional bonds within individuals and communities.

[1] Art Exchange
various artists
parochiehuisje, Blauwhuisstraat 7

An innovative collaboration between the workgroup Programming and Various Artists resulted in a disruptive concept for Watou 2024. By replacing the festival center and gift shop with an exchange shop in the old parish house, visitors can swap artworks or editions, creating a dynamic experience that challenges the speculative value of art and encourages multiple visits to explore the ever-changing collection.

[2.€] 1x1/44 € → x → ?
Workgroup Money
Watouplein

Using lottery, 1/44th of the available budget for the festival was transferred to a resident (he/she/they) of Watou. The transaction was anonymous and the recipient did not have to account for the money obtained. During a secret ceremony, the name of the recipient was hidden under one of the cobblestones of the village square.

[3] Broom Up!
VA.LIBCIN (uk.Pearl)
at all main roads leading into Whathow

"Backstage always controls onstage"
Market-regulated fairs, white cube/black box festivals, monocultured landscapes, and hate speech-infested internet: it's time to clean up our mess!

[4.TC] Transparency Cube
Workgroup Money
corner Vijfhoekstraat & Kasteelstraat

A captivating display of radical transparency at Watou 2024: a plexiglass cube showcasing a holographic tesseraet projecting live Temporary Information Center's '4 Investments a Belief in the Future is Necessary,' speculative financial experiments with a fraction of the festival's budget, as well as the cash flow of the festival.

[5] Vicious Covers
VA.MABZOOJKO (GOOG.ker)
future catalog

In the music world, covering songs is a common practice. It serves as a means to showcase one's skills while paying homage to others. Drawing inspiration from this tradition and being conceptually intertwined with the music world, Various Artists has devised a program to cover existing works from the 2022 festival edition. This process involves a combination of artificial intelligence (A.I.) and "Mechanical Turk." The prompts utilized in this endeavor, known as "vicious prompts," are intentionally non-descriptive. Nonetheless, the final outcome remarkably resembles the original works. The aim of this method is to provoke contemplation on the notions of originality, authorship, and the significance of influence and inspiration in the realm of visual arts.

[6.WWW] Watou Wishing Well
Workgroup Money
Warandestraat

From now on, one can find the Watou Wishing Well in the dry meadows of Watou. Once you have found the cubical wishing well, the idea is to throw a rounded amount of money into the well and make 4 wishes. The money that is retrieved from the well will be used to make some wishes come true.

[7] Doobie Kunstenaar (route)
VA.NNMAB (GOOG.zi)
starting point at H.Q. [25]

The Whathow Dead Artist Route (DAROBDD) is an alternative art walk that showcases the ashes of over 2000 deceased artists scattered along a path connected to a national network of art walks. Spanning an 8-kilometre trail, the route features the dispersion of national or international artist ashes, each accompanied by a name tag, placed every 4 metres.

[8.EGS] Exponential Growing Squares
Workgroup Decentralization and Sustainability
near Whathow Centraal

A creative snowball effect as a curatorial proposition: starting with an idea from one of the members of T.I.C., a group exhibition at Watou 2024 grew exponentially, with each participant inviting new artists. Over 8 months, the group expanded from 1 to 128 participants, resulting in a diverse showcase of artworks delimited to a 4x4cm format.

[9] Dead Poets Server
VA.SUFMLDIG (HM.ey)
Huis van de Dichter, Kapelaanstraat 2

The House of the Poet has been transformed into a server room. Within the parlour, there is a terminal where visitors can submit personal dream reports. These reports are then analyzed by an A.I. system, which interprets them through the lenses of Jungian psychology, Taoism, and scientific perspectives. Subsequently, the results are used as prompts to generate new, unedited poems by your favorite deceased poet.

[10.VHEKHA] Van het één komt het ander
Jakob Van den Broucke
Sint Bavo churchyard

Jakob Van den Broucke's communal compost heap in Watou brings the cycle of life and death to the forefront. The inhabitants ritually gather, mix, and aerate the green and brown waste, including symbolic document shredding, transforming it into fertilizer that nourishes the village's gardens and fields, fostering new life and connections.

[11] Election Day
VA.CINMABZOO (uae.Pearl)
parochiehuisje, Blauwhuisstraat 7

In August 2023, six curators were randomly selected from those listed on: [https:// databank.kunsten.be/ audiovisuele-beeldende-kunsten/profielen/curatoren/](https://databank.kunsten.be/audiovisuele-beeldende-kunsten/profielen/curatoren/). The purpose was to introduce them to the citizens of Whathow with the objective of electing the new curator for the festival's 2024 edition. Election Day took place on Sunday, August 17, 2023. Afterwards, things got complicated.

[12.O] OPEN
Workgroup Infrastructure, Embedding and Production
Kapelaanstraat 2

As a matter of real estate activation, Temporary Information Center, section Watou converted the House of the Poet into OPEN, an experimental shared living space. Through communal activities and self-regulation, OPEN fostered transformative experiences, enforced by the removal of gates and the implementation of open doors that have radically opened up the spaces. Several results of this experiment ([9], [14]) are part of Watou 2024.

[13] Erosi7s
VA.SUFCIN (ACG.ozD)
Art Exchange

A collection of poems presented on various mediums: solar-printed T-shirts and tissue paper, plexiglass, and enclosed within a letter. Various Artists undertakes the creation of new poetic works by translating existing texts into each of the more than 130 languages offered by Google, ranging from Zulu to Afrikaans. This process is repeated multiple times to generate as many variations of the original text as possible, resulting in a series of hollowed-out versions that (re) generate multiple meanings.

[14.WWS] **Watou Winter School**
Workgroup Programming
Kapelaanstraat 2

In February 2024, Watou Winter School (WWS) at OPEN embraced the motto ‘The Amateur is Always Right.’ Through four focus groups exploring perspectives of not-wanting, not-knowing, not-eating, and not-dreaming, participants engaged in deep reading sessions, creative cocktails, deliberate sabotaging of preferences, and attempts at free-painting. Embracing the uncertain, WWS challenged preconceived notions and sparked unpredictable journeys of exploration and self-discovery.

[15] First We Take Poperinghe
VA.NNDDWZOO (GOOG.kaz)
parochiehuisje, Blauwhuisstraat 7

The guide (artwork) you are holding in your hands is free to take. Though the festival attracts an average of 20,000 visitors, due to budgetary constraints, we have printed only 4,444 copies. To ensure that more copies can be printed before they run out, we kindly request your contribution to our field of piggy banks with a small amount. Thank you for your participation.

[16.444] 4theowner? 4theartist? 4thecommunity?
Maria Minnen and Mon the Greek
Houtkerkestraat 22, 14 Domaine de la Houblonnière, 130 Chemin des Cendres, Trappistenweg 21

This experienced duo of amateur architects/decorators selected four houses in Watou for infrastructural alteration, based on resident input and a shared budget. Collaborating with a construction supervisor, these idiosyncratic renovations blended problem-solving with artistic autonomy, resulting in unique and improved living spaces.

[17] Shepherds Grand Cru
VA.MABCIN (GOOG.kua)
Chateau Watou

Building rockets and spending time in space is today’s ‘castle building,’ financed by exploiting underpaid workers. The castle of Watou, built in 1620 by Johannes van Ydeghem, was no exception. To commemorate it, we are launching a lot Chateau Ydeghem 2024. (mise en bouteille par Aldi).

[18.a4a4a] Art After Philosophy and After Watou
Temporary Information Center, section Watou
online

This project, powered by an A.I. model, dynamically interprets 44 years of visual art, village life, and poetry. Through real-time image generation and internet data integration, the interactive online platform artafterphilosophyandafterwatou.net reimagines the history of Watou, exploring what could have been and what may lie ahead, serving as a digital counterpart to the festival and as a starting platform for the Watou Interpretation Center (W.I.C.).

[19] fugure
VA.CINSUFDIG (HM.bey)
various locations

Video projections illuminate the windows of carefully chosen houses in the village. These displays offer step-by-step instructions to make your own prehistoric arrowhead. The required materials are carefully arranged on the pavement, inviting visitors to take part in this chrono-divergent artwork. As makers complete their arrowheads, they are encouraged to delve into linguistic heritage. Participants are invited to explore the forgotten words of the Brussels dialect, bringing back to life the echoes of a bygone era. With each craft, a forgotten word is brought back to life.

[20.tsnbf] thou shalt not be 4gotten
Etty NyQuil Onage
Vijfhoeckstraat 20

During the previous 3 editions of the Watou Arts Festival professional artists and art students were encouraged to participate through an open call. After 3 failed applications, Etty NyQuil Onage pays tribute to non-selected artworks from previous years in the 2024 edition, using surplus textiles to create a carpet draped over miniature versions of the refused works.

[21] Portrait vs Landscape
VA.MDLWAR (HM.key)
Heidebeek

At each bridge over the Heidebeek stream, walkers are urged to adjust their photography practices. A clear demarcation emerges in the Whathow area: west of the stream, photographers are advised to use landscape mode and capture the panoramic vistas unfolding before them. On the east side of the stream, on the other hand, the magic lies in portrait mode, in which the intimate details and moments that adorn this fascinating terrain can be captured pictorially. To ensure seamless adoption, well-placed signs will decorate the bridges and guide photographers to the right mode.

[22.DL] DAGELIJKS LEVEN
Marc Dingenen
Winnezelestraat 44

Marc Dingenen’s poem ‘DAGELIJKS LEVEN’ emerged from a profound exploration of plurality, phenomenology, and the meaning of life during his 4-month stay in Watou. Every morning he inquired the reason he woke up, encouraging himself to write this down in one line. This sincere ode celebrates the village in its entirety, acknowledging both its beauty and rawness, highlighting the poetic potential of everyday life and the power of affirmation. It redefines artistry as citizenship and abolishes poetry as a distinct subdiscipline of life.

[23] Plata O Plomo (Vacature)
VA.ZOONN (GOOG.key)
everywhere

An open call (woodcut) for the position of Festival Inspirer for the next three years, offering the opportunity for a visionary individual, regardless of gender, to make a transformative impact by shaping the arts festival into a vibrant and inclusive multigenerational, multicultural event, with a strong emphasis on innovative artistic research and fostering a spirit of collaborative thinking among participants.

[24.GOHB] Gradueel Oplossen (Hier Blijven)
Agnes Povidone Sine
Marktplein

Agnes Povidone Sine’s durational performance Gradueel Oplossen (Hier Blijven) immerses her in the market square of Watou for 4 months. Through public sleeping, working, and fasting, she questions the possibility of merging into the environment and dissolving oneself. Appropriating the persona of a village character, she explores devotion, assimilation, and becoming an inseparable part of the village.

[25] H.Q. (chez Gisèle)
VA.DIGJKO (iri.Pearl)
2 Rue du Château

Saint-Eloi, a quaint, 400-year-old Franco-Flemish café in a remote corner of Whathow, retains its charm. Behind the counter is the eternally friendly 88-year-old Gisèle, an emblematic figure in the village, while a lush bunch of sansevierias gracefully occupy the window sills and almost obscure the view. Despite the modest warning that visitors must wear a safety helmet, we seized the opportunity to set up our headquarters there and immersed ourselves in the lively atmosphere. Try the festival’s signature drink, Picon vin blanc.

[26.EEEEEEEEEE] EN EN EN EN EN EN EN EN EN
Irene Pot
Winnezelestraat 20

At this sandbox, an intriguing experiment takes place. Playground equipment is removed, and half of the white sand is replaced with black sand. Visitors are encouraged to walk clockwise for 4 weeks, then counterclockwise for the following 4 weeks. The project challenges the restoration of the original division and questions the sustainability of strict dualities.

[27] If Looks Could Kill
VA.BLFLIB (ACG.ieyo)
Heidebeek

Somewhere among the fields, the Heidebeek, which meanders through the village, is diverted by a small canal, resulting in a unique political phenomenon in which a piece of Belgium is transferred to France and vice versa. This artistic intervention, which would normally have provoked an international diplomatic dispute, has been neutralised thanks to the fact that Whathow has emerged as one of the pioneering regions without borders in Europe.

[28.IMBY] In My Backyard
Idris, Nelly, Magdalena, Yvonne, Bonnie, Albert, Celia, Kevin, Youp, Abraham, Roman en Denise
Domaïne du Manoir

Embark on the alternative art route In My Backyard, traversing the gardens of 12 Watou residents. Enjoy rights-of-way through shortcuts, hedge holes, and fences. Encounter Idris’ readymade garden, Nelly’s mirrored replica of Idris’ readymade, Youp’s bottle garden house, Yvonne’s delightful milkshake, and Celia’s exquisite horticultural interventions with a focus on boxwood.

[29] In the Flat Field
VA.CINCXM (GOOG.kae)
Saint Antoine church

Watou 2024 evolved out of the refusal of our proposal in 2023. Inspired by the refusal mail we received, we have made arrangements for a choir performance, specially curated for this occasion. The powerful rendition will be brought to life by a 100-strong A.I. choir, resonating within the walls of the Whathow church of Saint-Antoine.

A live recording of the performance will be made available exclusively on cassette tape at [1] Art Exchange, allowing for unique exchanges between art enthusiasts.

[30.OM] Ontmantelink
Barri Buck Peg Zenger
Steenvoordestraat 59

Douviehoeve, once a luxury vacation spot, now reverts to its original farmstead form. 20,000 fortune cookies in the former cowshed contain texts taken from Gwy Mandelink’s internet browser cookies, revealing insights into the founder’s search history during the Poetry Summers he organised in Watou between 1980 and 2008.

[31] W.N.F.T.C.H.
VA.DIGLIB (GOOG.keb)
industrial park

Whathow N.F.T. Crating & Handling is a new production facility on the new industrial estate near Whathow Cargo. Given the size of the N.F.T. market, there will be a huge demand for wood and skilled workers. W.N.F.T.C.H. is making a prototype of their typical products available for viewing in the [1] Art Exchange. Crated N.F.T.i: 63286489316362837262934672048351 814730513494244334173611075142512573119725569

[32.EdC] Equipement de Campagne
Bajra Kopeks
Art Exchange

Equipement de Campagne explores the arbitrary nature of language and objects, presenting a classification diagram that draws parallels between agricultural tools and holiday accommodation in Watou. This thought-provoking work serves as an ode to farm life and hop cultivation while questioning the impact of touristification and the limits of commercializing the countryside.

[33] Jammer Maar Helaas
VA.LIBOMA (GOOG.kef)
Art Exchange

Jammer Maar Helaas (‘Sad But Unfortunate’) is the invisible force hidden behind the refusal email we were sent by the festival committee. The email provoked us to find new ways to market art, rethink the festival algorithm and think of possible future narratives. For the occasion, we created a T-Shirt to be worn by the members of the two collectives involved in this project.

[34.4FFFH] 4 FISH FAR FROM HOME
Vier Vissende Vrienden (V.V.V.)
2840 Route de Watou, 3500 Route Swaerte Straete, Douvieweg 65, Korte-Wildeweg 2

V.V.V., a collective of fishermen friends from Watou, embarked on a unique expedition to the antipode of their village, bringing back four live fish with autobiographical resemblances. These fish, including a Longnose Butterflyfish, Blackbelt Hogfish, Bullethead Parrotfish, and Checkerboard Wrasse, now reside in aquariums displayed as living self-portraits in the respective homes of the four fishing friends.

[35] Whathow Oracle
VA.OMASUF (iru.Pearl)
online, Art Exchange

You asked an online oracle machine two philosophical questions: “What” and “How” using the website <http://www.various-artists.be/whathow>. You waited 44 hours for the answer. Some of the answers have been printed on T-shirts and can be exchanged in the Art Exchange.

*I am the past, I'm in the past
Save you all, You all save
are you clinging to a rock?
people water well
the front door has a nice back
I know you don't
Check Control Master
the right foot requires itself
include me out of this
I'm not, I'm wrong
keep your start high
I'm sick, I'm rotting, I want to
he said illegal he said
it is surrounded by the ready
Bad Game is Messy
I had a dream that no one could dream of
as much as I like how I want it
do it again twice
But you're the only one talking about yourself
I did it at noon, I made it to noon
Tell your dog what you did for him
Flowers and BS are beautiful*

[36.ODD] opendeurendag
Workgroup Infrastructure, Embedding and Production
all houses

The festival’s workgroup Infrastructure, Embedding, and Production has planned an open house day for residents. On July 25, 2024, all houses in Watou will be open to visitors, with house keys kept in a central box at the Grote Markt. As there will be no fixed rules opendeurendag will be an experiment in hospitality and neighborhood. This inaugural event aims to establish a warm and welcoming tradition for future editions of the festival.

[37] Paradis Perdis
VA.OMALIB (irez.Pearl)
train tracks, Art Exchange

Parasitising the project **opendeurendag** by Temporary Information Center, section Watou (workgroup Infrastructure, Embedding and Production) (see above), the keys kept at the Grote Markt were stolen and placed on the train tracks.

[38.44] 44 (Elk verslag telt)
Temporary Information Center, section Watou
Art Exchange

All members of section Watou diligently took notes during the various get together in preparation of the festival. From these notes, an inspiring and authentic report was crafted, poetically transmitting itself into the future. This report also served as the foundation for the inaugural mission statement of the Watou Interpretation Center.

[39] R.V.C.A.
VA.CINSUFDIG (HuMath.ki)
online, Art Exchange

In 2024, the festival organization installed an NFT vending machine at the central station of the Art City of Whathow, near Poperinghe, Belgium, where arriving or departing visitors can purchase an NFT for 0.004 ETH. The collection includes four chapters, named after the four main protagonists of the festival, the resident, the visitor, the curator and the artist. <https://opensea.io/collection/rvca>

[40.44JDK] 44 jaar in de krant
Linda Goossens
Palingstraat 8

Linda Goossens, an attendant at every Watou edition, has captured her presence in a conceptual photo project spanning 44 summers. Her project was to be in the picture every time a journalist came to Watou. This collection of photos and newspaper clippings will be exhibited for the first time, solidifying her role as the face of the festival.

[41] St-Frankenstein
VA.CMXVDSDIG (kaz.Pearl)
churches and chapels

For artists struggling with depicting hands and feet, sky-high utility bills and opaque authorship, there is now hope in the form of St. Frankenstein. This patron saint protects the burgeoning creative A.I. industry and replaces religious statues throughout Whathow. Let us embrace this era of limitless artistic possibilities, guided by the enlightened patron saint of our time.

[42.44JD] 44 jaar denken
Maria Peeters
Art Exchange

Maria Peeters (b. 1950) has visited Watou every summer since 1980. For the 2024 edition, she spontaneously decided to submit a poem about how art and poetry have changed her view on things and experiences.

[43] T-Truck
VA.CINZOO (irey.Pearl)
various locations

The village priest opens the church doors, two neighbours are embroiled in a heated argument, teenagers secretly smoke a joint or a drunken festival-goer gets disoriented. To highlight these everyday occurrences in the village, a truck equipped with a folding tribune is on permanent standby, ready to shed light on these popular events.

[44.HlkvW] Het laatste kunstwerk van Watou
Temporary Information Center, section Watou
Watou

The final artwork of Watou is a cubical glass dome that symbolically and physically encapsulates the 44 years of art and poetry in the village. To manage this structure and create the Watou Experience, the Watou Interpretation Center (W.I.C.) was established. The W.I.C. will organize the exhibition Watou as Muse as part of the Watou Experience, with a preview of the curatorial statement available during the 2024 edition of the festival.

[45] Tuesday Droneday
VA.JKODDW (GOOG.po)
parochiehuisje, Blauwhuisstraat 7

Every Tuesday, on closing day, audiences will have an exclusive opportunity to experience the festival from a unique perspective through drone tours. <http://www.various-artists.be/droneday>

[46.WidK] Waar is de kunst? W.I.C.
starting point at Douvieweg 21a

Since 1980, Watou has been a hub for art and poetry, and the Watou Interpretation Center (W.I.C.) has catalogued the village’s artworks. Waar is de kunst? is an exhaustive art route that maps out existing artworks in Watou, serving as a reference work and available for future visitors, with a preview during the 2024 edition of the festival.

[47] Twenty-One-Breaths (Mugging)
VA.ZOOCXM (ireb.Pearl)
parochiehuisje, Blauwhuisstraat 7

Take your time and enjoy a free cup of coffee served in our unique “Jammer Maar Helaas” disposable ceramic coffee mugs. These carelessly designed mugs offer a touch of elegance and charm to enrich your Whathow 24 visitor experience.

[48.ABR] ABRAKADABRA
ABRAKADABRA
all houses with a sound system

ABRAKADABRA is an enigmatic music ensemble that levels the audience with ephemeral sonic experimentation. Every Tuesday during the festival they will reside in the dark realms of the Hunter’s Lodge near Lovie castle, and their mysterious compositions will be live-streamed to the residents of Watou. Who pulls the strings? Blows the pipes? Calls the shots?

[49] Ovo Incognito *
VA.MdLBOB (irDA.Pearl)
various locations

This ceramic egg, with a filling of black ink, is to be taken to a white cube exhibition. Show your disapproval at the sight of a tone-deaf artwork.

* after a story by Cildo Meireles

[50.4] 4
Evi River
Art Exchange

Evi River cultivates 4 as an all-encompassing and organizing principle to clarify reality. All the works in her oeuvre can be reduced to one all-explanatory principle and are titled 4.

In the publication 4, River elaborates on the proposition that everything is four in 30 different languages.

[51] Verlaud & Rimbaie
VA.BOBSUF (key.Pearl)
parochiehuisje, Blauwhuisstraat 7

Imagine if Arthur Rimbaud and Paul Verlaine were still alive and we commissioned them to write each other’s poems. Created by a machine.

[52.4] 4
Evi River
Watou

Evi River initiated a new opening tradition for the 2024 edition: runners carried the elements of sand, fire, water, and air from 4 different continents. After 4 months on the road, the elements will be merged on June 28, symbolizing the festival’s opening day.

[53] Rotonde Project
VA.CINBLFLIBMAB (ACG.izak, iro.Pearl, ACG.izae)
3 new roundabouts

It is a wet dream for most artists to create a work for a roundabout. The city of Poperinghe is fulfilling this desire by converting three intersections into roundabouts. The city government promised to add a new project for every forthcoming edition of Whathow. A surplus to the project is that our French neighbours, whom we want to give easy access to the festival, will feel comfortable coming to these parts.

i/ **No man’s land:** the fertile soil was excavated to then let nature do its work.

r/ **Statue d’Artiste:** a triple large bronze statue of an artist firmly holding her/his/their “kunstwerkattest”

z/ **landFill:** a place to discharge “ephemeral” installations from previous editions of the festival

[54.4] 4
Evi River
Art Exchange

Evi River was asked to provide a branding intervention for this year’s festival. Each visitor to the festival will receive a tattoo in situ consisting of four lines originating from one single starting point. Visitors can choose the placement on their body.

[55] subClub
VA.ZOOMAB (GOOG.pi)
24 Rue de Calais

The region’s first nightclub is open 24/7, where performers entertain the audience by reading reports on European Commission subsidies.

[56.] geen titel
artist unknown
Trappistenweg

A mysterious grain square appeared in a field near the Trappistenweg, resembling Jakob Van den Broucke’s diagram “Capitalism is a hyper-abstract impersonal structure and it would be nothing without our cooperation from 2022.” Approaching the grain square may induce symptoms of ignorance, nausea, fatigue, tinnitus, heat sensations, relaxation, and spontaneous healings.

[57] Music for Freeport
VA.CXMNN (GOOG.keDA)
Whathow airport

With Whathow rapidly emerging as an arts mecca and boasting a historically dense population of collectors, it was inevitable that an economic free zone (Freeport) would be established. However, this development may not be favorable for artists, as collectors nowadays tend to exclusively engage with fellow collectors. In response, Various Artists have devised an algorithm-driven, non-repeating soundtrack exclusively tailored for Freeport, even though it remains unheard due to its secure storage within the warehouse.

[64.IHMBGEHINGDNIHAJ] IK HEB MIJN BEST GEDAAN EN HET IS NIET GELUKT DUS NU IS HET AAN JULLIE

the Estate of Kasper Demeulemeester & the Estate of Rabo Karabekian
Watouplein 12

A white, empty room, that you can only enter alone. In one corner of the room a label, reading: ‘I did my best and it didn’t work out so now it’s up to you.’ Those who look closely discover even more: the wallpaper is made out of prepared painting canvas. Is this a provocation, an impetus for inspiration? Who dares to accept the invitation this room-sized canvas seems to offer, even if no one sees you?

[58.ds] de speelvogels
Rennie Holz en Douba Hart
Café bij Dirk

Two former Documenta Fifteen participants sought a more action-oriented context in Watou, only to find themselves entangled in meetings once again. In appreciation for their hospitality, they submitted Watou A4s – playful creations on checkered paper born out of assembly boredom.

[59] Deus não deu Asas pra Cobras
VA.BLFBVDSD (ACG.ohp)
parochiehuisje, Blauwhuisstraat 7

‘God didn’t give wings to the snakes’ refers to: a) a practice in restricted growth for Monstera Deliciosa and Fig Tree. b) the liberation of a bonsai (Ulmus minor). c/ handJob.BCL, directed growth for English Oak, and Fig Tree.

[60.lvn] Le village neutralisé
Ben Greffe
OC De Bollaard

Drawing inspiration from the political turmoil surrounding the 2024 elections in Belgium, Ben greffe captured Watou as a CENZUB, a fictional city for urban warfare training, like they have in France. In the case of an armed conflict in Belgium, the border village with its dwindling population becomes a potential battleground for armed forces preparing to confront opposing troops.

[61] Whathow
VA.DDWZOOBLF (ACG.izaD)
imaginal

An imaginary territory measuring 4 by 4 square kilometers was marked and leveled at 20 meters above sea level. In this conceptual piece of land art, all boundaries were intentionally removed, creating a vast and unbounded art plain that embodies boundless creativity and uncompromising artistic expression.

[62.FTW] Fotografisch-Therapeutische Wandelingen
the Estate of Kasper Demeulemeester
Kleine Markt

For the Watou 2024 edition, Timo Becker, caretaker of the Estate, explored Watou through the virtual reality environment of Google Maps, using the FTW protocol to establish a profound connection between self and world. Join this immersive journey and discover Watou through this transformative lens at <http://3600steps.be/Watou>.

[63] A Whiter Shade of Pale (V.nn.n)
VA.MAQDIG (HM.keb)
Art Exchange

The surplus catalog of Kunstenfestival Watou 2022 was shredded and recycled in accordance with a new format (<http://www.various-artists.be/vnnn>) as part of a study that aimed to break away from the century-old German DIN format.

[64.IHMBGEHINGDNIHAJ] IK HEB MIJN BEST GEDAAN EN HET IS NIET GELUKT DUS NU IS HET AAN JULLIE
the Estate of Kasper Demeulemeester & the Estate of Rabo Karabekian
Watouplein 12

A white, empty room, that you can only enter alone. In one corner of the room a label, reading: ‘I did my best and it didn’t work out so now it’s up to you.’ Those who look closely discover even more: the wallpaper is made out of prepared painting canvas. Is this a provocation, an impetus for inspiration? Who dares to accept the invitation this room-sized canvas seems to offer, even if no one sees you?