

# AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2013-2015



*Traversee, Group Show, 2012*

## la malterie

### Section 1 - Organisational aims, rationale and target outcomes:

#### Aim 1 - Support artists' professional development

At la malterie our main aim is the support of artists' professional development, through:

- Supporting creation and artistic research (through artists studios and residency programmes)
- Information and professional development
- Promoting the work of the artists that we support, through off-site exhibitions and events
- Supporting professional networking, peer meetings and connections with professional networks (in the arts sector and beyond)

This approach has required a shift in the organisation's thinking in order to maximise audience engagement with the work created both at la malterie and by the artists engaged with la malterie's programmes.

The re-focusing of la malterie's aims to supporting artists will be characterised by a reduction in the number of events that are held on site in preference for more off-site work, particularly in the case of exhibitions. Events will only occasionally take place at la

malterie (e.g. meetings and end of residency shows), which will make it more difficult to develop a loyal audience.

Another change in thinking means that the organisation will concentrate on those elements that distinguish it from other local organisations, what makes la malterie different? As the building is predominantly a workplace and not an exhibition-focused space, any exhibitions always take into account the unique qualities la malterie and of its support for artists. In an organisation such as ours audience development must be approached in terms of raising quality and awareness, as opposed to increasing diversification and specific audience development activity. As audience development is not a primary strand of activity as there is not the capacity within the organisation to have a member of staff dedicated to this activity. This limits the amount of work that can be done in his area.

We aspire to develop quantity through the development of quality.

#### Aim 2 – Further developing audiences

The collaboration and knowledge sharing with the LCP partnership has given skills and the methodology to help us observe and define our audiences. It introduced us to a new way of thinking of audience development



*L'Equilibre des Forces, Private view, 2012*

strategies with regards to the project and the objectives of la malterie.

To begin our Audience Development Plan, we took as a starting point the results of an audience survey that we conducted between 2009 and 2012. We also took into account the re-focusing of the organisation and rewriting of its mission and project aims, completed by the board of la malterie in 2011.

### **Contributions of our audience survey to the development of our strategy:**

From 2009 to 2012, la malterie studied its audiences in the frame of the LCP project. This study aimed to identify the visitors to our exhibitions. The data we collected and analysed from audiences to 4 exhibitions led us to define the main strands of our activity for the next few years. Key results:

- Most visitors had heard of the exhibition through word of mouth (from 39-50% = an average of 40%). This is also the way in which most people had found out about la malterie (62-70%), which demonstrates its importance.
- 48% of the visitors have links to the visual arts sector, through their work or studies.

NB: As part of this plan we have chosen not to separate online audiences from other audiences. First of all because the results of our audience studies show that we are not followed by a specific online audience, but that our presence online is a way of keeping

in contact with most of our audience. Also because we believe that digital tools and their application should support all audience development activity. Therefore the development of our online audience is implicit in every part of this plan and does not require a separate strategy.

## **Section 2: Audiences**

### **Audiences at a Glance 2013-2015**

***Audiences for visual arts events:*** 2,159 at la malterie in 2011 (+15,000 at Lille Art Fair)

As la malterie does not know the number and size of events that will take place between 2013-2015 it is difficult to plan how an increase in audience might be achieved. We do aspire to present at least 1 off-site exhibition per year and to develop new types of events and to continue to have a presence at Lille Art Fair.

Our goal is to maintain current audience figures, while doing fewer events. This means concentrating on bigger events and broader communication.

***Online audiences :*** 48,602 unique viewers on the website, and 1,076 followers on Twitter.

Goal : +15% every year between 2013 and 2015.

## Targeted Audiences 2013-2015

Artists (professionals or in education), professionals (e.g. broadcasters, gallery owners, art collectors, curators, companies), volunteers (members of la malterie and non-member volunteers).

### Other Key Audiences:

Local audiences (neighbourhood, local organisations, local schools), tourists and the general public

We will engage with developing our audiences in the three main target groups:

- Artists
- Visual arts professionals and other sector professionals
- La malterie volunteers

### Target Audiences Development

Starting with the observation that word of mouth and the development of a quality brand are key to the way in which the organisation is communicated (mostly due to the fact that more than 100 people are involved with la malterie daily), the development of the target audiences will be based around a qualitative

approach that will spread positive word of mouth communication. It is hoped that this will correspond to la malterie's brand identity and work to increase the value of the brand, by highlighting the quality of our activities and the aspects that set la malterie apart from other local organisations.

The internal structure of the organisation and its governance relies on collective management. Exercising responsibility requires specific management skills and knowledge, which means that the organisation is suited to the role of mediation and providing quality personal support for its members.

The running of such a collective organisation is important work for staff and board members, as every user/ member of la malterie is involved in the process of sharing in and promoting the brand identity.

### Artists

**Professional artists:** These already make up an important part of our audiences. However, the audience survey has revealed that the artists attending our resource centre activities are not attending other events, such as exhibitions. We will have to find ways to communicate to them the wide range of our activities, and offer them opportunities to sign up for regular information (for example by subscribing them to the newsletter). Since January 2012, artists participating in events at the resource centre automatically become members of our organisation, meaning they will receive more information. The information on our activities will then have a greater reach amongst those audiences, though other ways of disseminating information to this group will also be explored.

**Artists in training/learning :** We would like to work more closely with art schools in the Nord-Pas de Calais region, in order to develop partnerships based on offering career advice and support for students on how to create their professional status.



*L'Equilibre des Forces, 2012*



*Artist Studio, 2012*

**Online:** We will work to develop better online tools for the resource centre, so help reach our target market and develop a loyal following of artists. We will build a community of resource centre users who will be able to make connections between their experiences and to share knowledge and expertise. We will also use these channels to disseminate information about our other activities.

### **Visual arts professional and professionals from other sectors**

Creating connections between artists and professionals in order to aid artists' professional development is one of our main objectives. It concerns arts professionals (writers, gallerists, curators) as well as the cultural organisations and their stakeholders (e.g. friends of museums), art collectors and people working in other areas who might work with artists or commission new work. We have started to develop events for this audience, such as private visits, and will continue to develop activities which can further the careers of artists (by creating exhibition opportunities, opportunities to sell work, commissioning opportunities etc.).

These events will be at the centre of our support for the professional development of young artists, as they not only support professional development but also promote la malterie as a qualified intermediary for artists and professionals.

We are currently discussing the creation of a

specific communication tool for this group, such as a database of professional contacts, and how to organise this to suit our users and events. We are also discussing how to develop sponsorship and increase to visibility of our activities amongst companies in the region. Our forthcoming event, which will be part of Lille 3000 Fantastique, will be the next opportunity to connect with companies and businesses in order to research private funding for our projects.

This work research will involve la malterie volunteers who have networking skills and can help develop this work.

The next planned improvement to the website will be around professional communication, to incorporate more detailed information about la malterie's artists and their work, whilst highlighting the actions and values of the organisation. However promoting the artists online will never replace networking and making the professional connections that are developed and maintained by la malterie's team on a daily basis.

### **Volunteers**

The collective governance of the organisation (through the board and commissions of members and non-members) involves many different people. We believe that mobilising



*Qubo Gas (Traversee), 2012*

this large amount of people is essential to our audience development strategy. Our plans is to use this collective energy to promote la malterie as every member/ user (artists, board members, commission members, volunteers etc.) is a potential advocate who can disseminate information about the organisation through their personal and professional networks. We will focus on enabling them to promote la malterie and raising their awareness of the importance of their involvement.

Non-member volunteers are people who help us deliver our activities. We need to take more advantage of the diversity of these volunteers, as their different backgrounds and networks create the potential to disseminate the brand to new audiences. We will raise awareness of their capacity to act as a spokesperson for la malterie. To do this, we will focus of giving them the tools to learn more about the organisation, a 'user manual' which will contain information on the organisation and la malterie's projects and targets. It is important that each person is equipped with the correct information, so that they feel able to act as an advocate for the collective.

We will promote this collective spirit through organising dedicated events for members, users and volunteers to meet and build contacts, for everyone to share their information, skills and views and increase their knowledge of the organisation.

We will organise regular meetings for the artist members to discuss their projects. These meetings will also be an opportunity to share views and to explain our activities, changes to the organisation and development objectives.

A few years ago we began to set up professional training sessions for volunteers. We will develop and diversify these sessions and, in partnership with other cultural organisations, we will organise the creation of a professional training programme for volunteers. This will address their needs through provide



*Working with local schools, 2012*

opportunities for meaningful professional development, encourage the cohesion of the group, promote their involvement, improve the quality brand of la malterie as an organisation which aims to develop the knowledge and skills of individuals and help to attract more volunteers to la malterie.

### **Other target audiences**

**Local audiences:** In the frame of the LCP project, we have started to work at profile-raising in our neighbourhood. Communicating our values and activities amongst our neighbours is still one of our objectives, as is our participation in local social life. We will also maintain and develop sustainable links with the schools of the district.

Communication about local events will be developed to create connections with the people working and living in the neighbourhood. We aim to promote the creative activities of the artists and the energy surrounding our building as to the district.

**Tourists and general public:** Although our main target audiences are professionals and artists it is important to participate in events that will also attract the general public, as this is away to increase spread the brand as providers of high quality and original art experiences. Therefore we will continue to develop our presence at major local events such as Lille Art Fair, Lille 3000 and Open Studios of Département du Nord. These

events are an opportunity to reach different and non-arts audiences, as well as tourists, through a wider communication.

Strategic partners that strengthen links to other areas of activity are also important, as these represent a wide range of new opportunities for artists.



Part  
funded by  
the E.U.

All images featured are from the la malterie archive unless stated otherwise.

© all images copyright la malterie