

# Introduction the Milena principle

## A Sensitive Thinking

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the Milena principle is a 'think tank' with a global vision in which people from several European countries come together.

The group is made up of artists and experts from various domains and disciplines including science, ecology, alternative health therapies, literature, art history, sound art and music, architecture, technology and philosophy.

Acting as an independent art platform we distinguish ourselves by working on unconventional ways and by establishing unexpected and nomadic debates on art [source: curator Artemis Potamianou > MOMA NY & Tate London UK > Art Athina 2014].

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## [ Human Capital ]

We work as a nomadic European organisation and we realized art events in countries all over Europe.

Within the projects of the Milena principle various international artists, writers, scientists come together and cooperate, create with a multi- and interdisciplinary attitude and reflect about the border crossing aspects of culture, art, science, ecology and health.

One of the important aspects of the Milena principle members is their individual research in various fields such as art, philosophy and science. the Milena principle wants to invest in Human Capital.

the Milena principle organized a variety of artistic and cultural events connecting people throughout Europe in the last decade.

We built a network of international partners in more than 15 countries, including private persons, cultural institutions, universities and museums, all established through personal contacts.

The majority of activities were realized on basis of voluntary work of our team and international partners, with no or little money nor governmental help.



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## [ A Nomadic Museum ]

Our events are processes, laboratories of a feeling thinking in which instruments of art are as well instruments of science and knowledge.

It are human fields, artistic pop up events, meeting places in an intimate atmosphere open to participation of the public and community. A humanist attitudes merges as well with an artistic one.

We refer the nomadic aspect of renaissance artists, who did not only travel with their work through Europe but also made connections with all the places they visited.

Renaissance artists, scientists and philosophers found each other via their common interest for a new philosophy.

Through exchanges of ideas with artist and friends, whom they visited during their continuous journeys, they created a network of solidarity and affinity.

Our art projects have an explicit utopian and human dimension. We believe that we are not individuals in our own right, but who become human in relation to others.



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## [ The Dürer Connection ]

Albrecht Dürer [1471–1528] visited the Netherlands and Flanders [Antwerp in 1520]: the Milena principle wants to actualize this old tradition.

These great renaissance persons found each other via their common interest and thinking. Through their travels they moved boundaries, they travelled with and via ideas. Through exchanges of ideas with artist friends, whom they visited during these long journeys, they created a network of solidarity and affinity.

All events are linked with 'the Dürer connection', a guideline within the projects of the Milena principle, referring to the nomadic aspect of renaissance artists, travelling with their work through Europe and making connections with the places they visited and with the people they met.

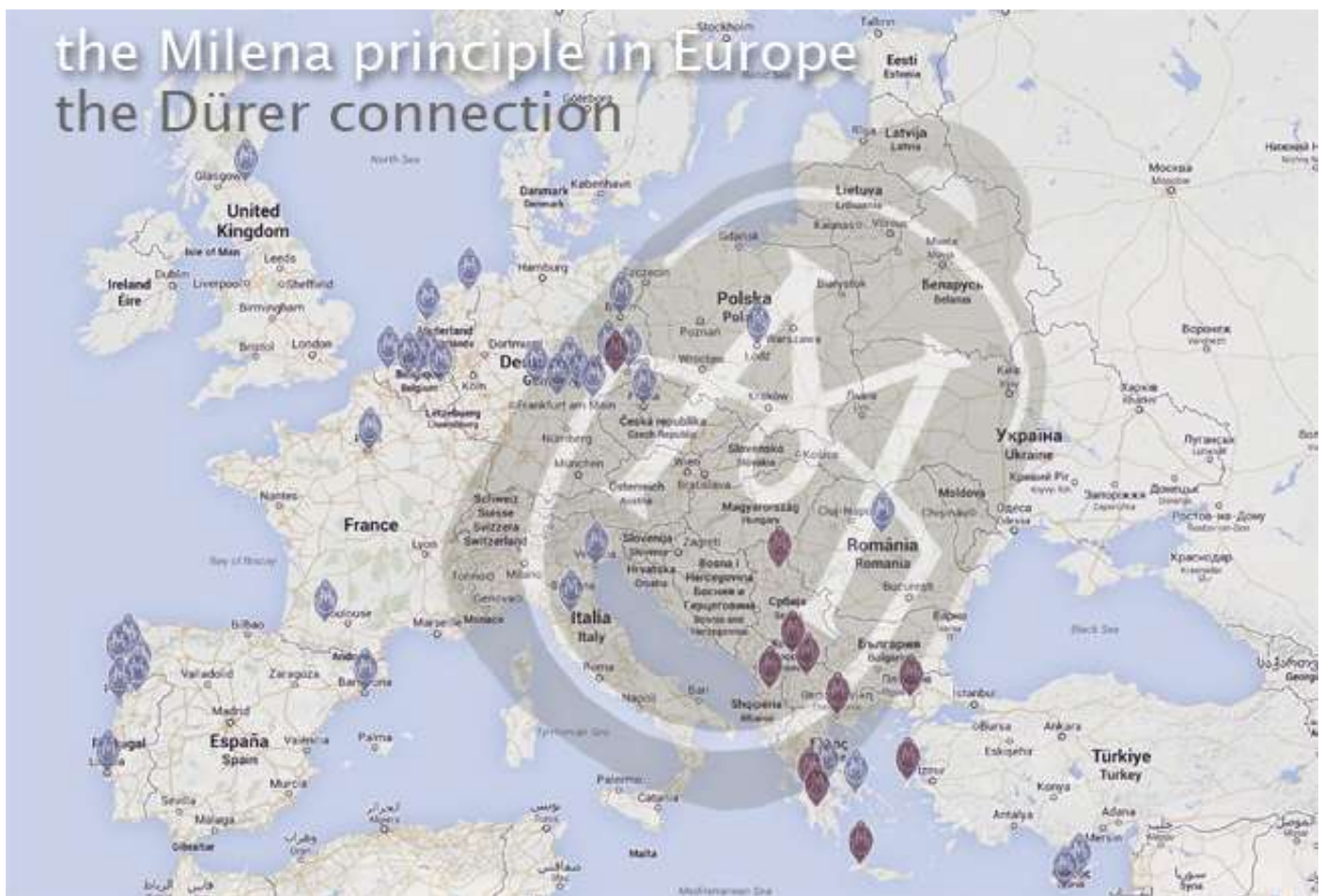
Renaissance artists, scientists and philosophers exchanged ideas on a border crossing way and in an atmosphere of friendship, during mutual visits on their continuous journeys. Our art projects connect explicitly with this European, utopian and human dimension.

the Milena principle focuses on the ongoing travelling project "the Dürer connection" (2003 ), developing itself as an European nomadic network, initiating collaborative encounters between public, experts and artists, referring to the Flemish renaissance, when artists, philosophers and scientists traveled unceasingly, connecting with people and places.

The projects refer to this utopian and human dimension, with traveling as an artistic instrument, with events and exhibitions realized in Germany, Holland, Portugal, Poland, Spain, Italy, Czech Republic, Romania, Austria, Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Greece, Crete, parallel events in Latin America, as well bringing artists and people from many European countries to Belgium.

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## [ Mapping our working space ]



Amsterdam – Antwerp – Athens – Barcelona – Belgrado – Berlin – Beveren – Braga – Brasilia – Bruges – Chania – Chemnitz  
 Chios – Compostella – Delphi – Dimitisana – Dresden – Edinburgh – Essen – Florence – Ghent – Guimaraes – Jahnishausen  
 Kassel – La Romieu – Leipzig – Limassol – Lisbon – Lodz – Ljubljana – Naumburg – Neo Chorio – New York – Nicosia  
 Nieuwolda – Paris – Patras – Porto – Prague – Prishtina – Santiago de Compostela – Sint-Niklaas – Skopje – Soufi  
 Thessaloniki – Tinos – Tirana – Tirgu Mures – Tongeren – Venice – Vigo – Weimar

## [ An independent art platform ]

Curator Artemis Potamianou (MOMA & Tate London), who is currently based in Athens, considers the Milena principle as one of the 49 most important independent art platforms from all over the world, distinguishing themselves by working on unconventional ways and by establishing unexpected and influential debates on art.

Based on the “unity is strength” principle, the platforms have secured their own place on the international art arena without antagonizing the environment they are called upon to serve.

[the Milena principle was selected by Artemis Potamianou for the Athens Art Fair, ART-ATHINA 2014. Platforms project].

The vision of the body as an instrument of art and knowledge and guidelines as serenity, silence, intimacy, enchantment, inspiration are defining our way of working. What could an ecological art of living look like?

How can we get there – how do we have to change our behaviour, what can we contribute as individuals? What new interpretations and concepts do we need?

The French author [winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1947], André Gide said: *'I have no use for knowledge that has not been preceded by a sensation'*.



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## [ The Politics of the Heart ] a multidisciplinary field of community

One of the aims of the Milena principle is to create a forum for cross-border working around the essence of politics as a poetic, creative, human instrument.

'Nomads of a new era', moving in a field of art, ecology, philosophy and politics, fed by utopian ideas. Terms as "solidarity" or "togetherness" are considered as an inexhaustible source of inspiration. The aim is to organize seminars with participants from different tendencies in a common project.

New alliances need to be formed among all actors in society at both national and international level for us to overcome the challenges posed by the climate and resource crisis. Innovative alliances between various actors will be presented at this event.

The focus will also be how to mobilise people to enter into new alliances. Collaboration among different groups with their specific (work) cultures brings with it a host of difficulties. The discussion will also revolve around strategies for overcoming these difficulties.



Which new skills do we need in the environmental crisis to be able to lead the good life?

Can the promise of the industrial age – that economic growth can "create" prosperity and thus happiness for the individual – still play a role?

The equation prosperity = happiness is no longer true. Can a new art of living help us achieve what we call happiness?

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## [ Shaping Silence – Acoustic Ecology ]

We see sound as a source of knowledge about society.

Silence is sound too. We approach sound in an artistic way. We only use open source software.

We are creating audio tours that allow for a spontaneous and intuitive way to explore the city. We are inspired by the Situationists and their psychogeography.

We allow people to make their own audio tours in an android app. It allows you to edit and add sound to a place.

You can save your sound walk, load it to your smartphone. And once you are there, you can listen to it. You can display your audio material everywhere, with GPS.

Instead of a fixed guided audiotour, it is a matter of discovery. Space is filled up with memories of the people that live in the spaces.

Now you can discover the city in an emotional way.

We actually create a collective memory of the city. They are half fiction half documentary audio walks.

We invite people to be surprised about the things that are normally unnoticed and discover personal stories.



## [ Growing silence ] silence as an instrument of experience

A project to promote the qualities of silence and space in an urban context.

Our project is about the experience and importance of urban silence and the connection between space and silence. Not the physical definition of silence, or the acoustical definition counts.

Through a phenomenological approach to silence the artists explore how sound unambiguously works on the human being (in this case in an urban context).

Silence is an instrument of experience and as well as an instrument of knowledge.

The project wants to realize a cultural bridge between the presence of silence as access to historical and natural soundscapes and the inner experience of silence.

Silence is not limited to a material–acoustical aspect, silence is as well a part of city life as an inner space, a breathing space.

This project tries to involve young people in the making of and creating of (urban) silence. We invite students and young artists into the design process and try to engage them in the future development of their environment and to excite them about the city.

Approaching silence will explore silence in the city, looking for design tools for the shaping of places and urban experiences.



## [ Amplified Gestures ]

Often acoustic space is ignored in the construction of a public space. The prevalence of noise or sounds that do not convey any social significance and are a disturbance of the quality of life, reduces the ability to identify with the place we inhabit.

It is therefore urgent to think about the acoustical problems societies are facing today and integrate that thinking in urban planning, architecture and management of public space, because the idea we have of ourselves, our personal awareness and the relationships we build in the external world, are inextricably linked to a space.

We all exist somewhere. And personal identity also relates to this.

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## [Private Foundation van Biesen–Mestdagh]

the Milena principle is the artistic platform of the Private Foundation Van Biesen–Mestdagh, functioning within the Foundation as its creative center for artistic presentation, production, participation and reflection, organisatory and financially managed by the Private Foundation Van Biesen–Mestdagh.

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## [ A network of meetings ]

The Milena principle has already organised international events during the 'Friedrich Nietzsche Seminar' in Weimar [Germany 2005] > performances in the Dom of Naumburg [Germany 2005] > the park of Bellevue and in the Grunewald in Berlin [Germany 2006] > S.M.A.K. [Museum of contemporary Art] in Ghent Belgium 2004 > the Museo Goldoni in Venice [Italy 2005] > 'Residents of Cities' Amsterdam [the Netherlands 2006] > at the house of Rea Thönges Stringaris during Documenta 12, Kassel Germany 2007 > 'The Marcilio Ficino connection' Firenze Italy 2009 > Portugal: Braga Porto 2009–2012: Clube Literario, Velha-a-Branca, Nogueira da Silva Museum, Biscainhos Museum, Show Me Gallery, Pedroromy Gallery, Serralves Foundation, 'SinfoSaramago' Congress [José Saramago Foundation Lisbon] 2012 'Resounding Cities': Faculty of Fine Arts Lisbon > 'the Bolyai Art Festival' [Transylvania Romania] 2010 > (no) Tour S.M.A.K. [Ghent Belgium] 2011 > Fotofestival 'Out of Space' [Lodz Art centre – Lodz Poland] 2011 > Athens: 'About' Cultural Centre, ASFA, Goethe-Institut, [Delphi–Athens, Greece] 2011, 'Resounding Cities' Athens Science Festival, 'Art Athina' Art Fair Athens 2014 & 2015 > 'Academia Dantesca Jahnishausen' [Jahnishausen Germany] 2011, 'B\_Tour Festival' Berlin/Leipzig 2015 > 'The garden of E-' [E Culture Fair – Hasselt Belgium] 2011 > ECCO [the Brazilian Centre for Contemporary Art Brasilia Brazil] 2011, 'Aberto Brasilia', 'Anatomia da Escrita' [National Museum of Brasilia – Brasilia Brazil] 2011–2012 > 'Ilhas do corpo' [National Library of Brasilia – Brasilia Brazil] 2012 > '360° travelling spaces' [Bienal do Livro e da Leitura – Brasilia Brazil] 2012 > 'Balkan Tale' [Goethe-Institut Athens] Athens Greece & Europe 2012–2013 > 'The Listening City' Essen, Dresden, Athens [Goethe-Institut Athens] 2013–2014 > 'A knocking bird', residents and European visitors to Sint-Niklaas Belgium [a project by the Cultuurcentrum City Sint-Niklaas with support of Grundtvig, Lifelong Learning Programme, Education and Culture, European Union] 2013.

Some more travelling projects are to be launched in Portugal, Greece, Spain, Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Romania, Brazil and France. The exhibitions contain a number of activities: lectures, interventions, workshops...

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