

Luggage Carrier the Milena principle

Voyages as Art: the Dürer connection



"It is not about arriving, it is how to get there"

What if 'traveling' is considered to be 'a work of art'?

Practical worries of being on the road are interspersed with discussions, performances and lectures. Experiencing a place, visiting a museum together, sharing ideas, art philosophical conversations, agreements, interviews with congenial persons are a breeding ground for instant creation.

Sometimes works of art are made and left behind with the host(ess) or at the venue.

The further development of these projects is also based on the nomadic aspect that characterized the earlier renaissance artists, who did not only travel with their work through Europe but also made connections with all the places they visited.



Albrecht Dürer for instance visited the printer Plantijn in Antwerp, these great renaissance persons found each other via their common interest for the new Hermetic and humanistic thinking.

Through their travels they moved boundaries, they made inner journeys, 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.

The aspect of the artist as a 'playing human being' leads to conditions which enable the artist to discover and grow.

This laboratory, the search as an interiorized process, results in wanting to see more in the reality surrounding us, with the work of art as an end result that gives shape to these thoughts.

The 'Path of Dürer' is about an inner journey, a searching trip, the nomadic elements of being on the road. Every gesture which makes sense is evidence of the extra element in reality.

We want to consider this gesture artistically and let it grow. The creative energy does its job.



In essence, it's about experience and reflection.

Travel presupposes wonder, understanding and empathy. It is an art that can be learned. Time is your own time. Surprises, alone with thoughts and experiences, as Nietzsche who always spoke with his shadow. You're on your own. Meeting people, gets a different interpretation. "Man reist je nicht, um anzukommen, sondern um zu reisen", Goethe said.

To travel is being on the move, an existential adventure. The journey is the goal. Travel and philosophy: it is an encounter with the other, in the form of architecture, landscape, people and their customs.

Travelling through the landscape is travelling in your head. There is no rule, but the more you travel, the more you travel consciously.

Past 'voyages as art':

Water Carrier Invisible Cities, Italian Cultural Institute Athens Greece 2015.

Sea Born Venice Guidecca Italy 2015.

B-Tour Festival Leipzig Germany 2015.

Resounding Cities Lisbon Portugal 2015.

Breeding Grounds University Belas Artes Lisbon Portugal 2014.

Water Carrier Museu Nogueira da Silva Braga Portugal 2014.

Sinfo Saramago Congress Saramago Foundation Lisbon & Nogueira da Silva Braga Portugal 2012.

Liquid Islands Venice Italy 2011.

Canto indentro Accademia Dantesca Jahnishausen Germany 2011.

Growing Silence Goethe Institut, About and ASFA Athens Greece 2011.

Embracing the landscape Braga, Portugal ∞ Santiago De Compostella Spain 2010.

How long is Now? Braga, Porto Portugal ✕ Vigo, Spain 2010.

The Marcilio Ficino connection Firenze Italy 2009.

Gepäckträger (II) Kassel Germany 2007.

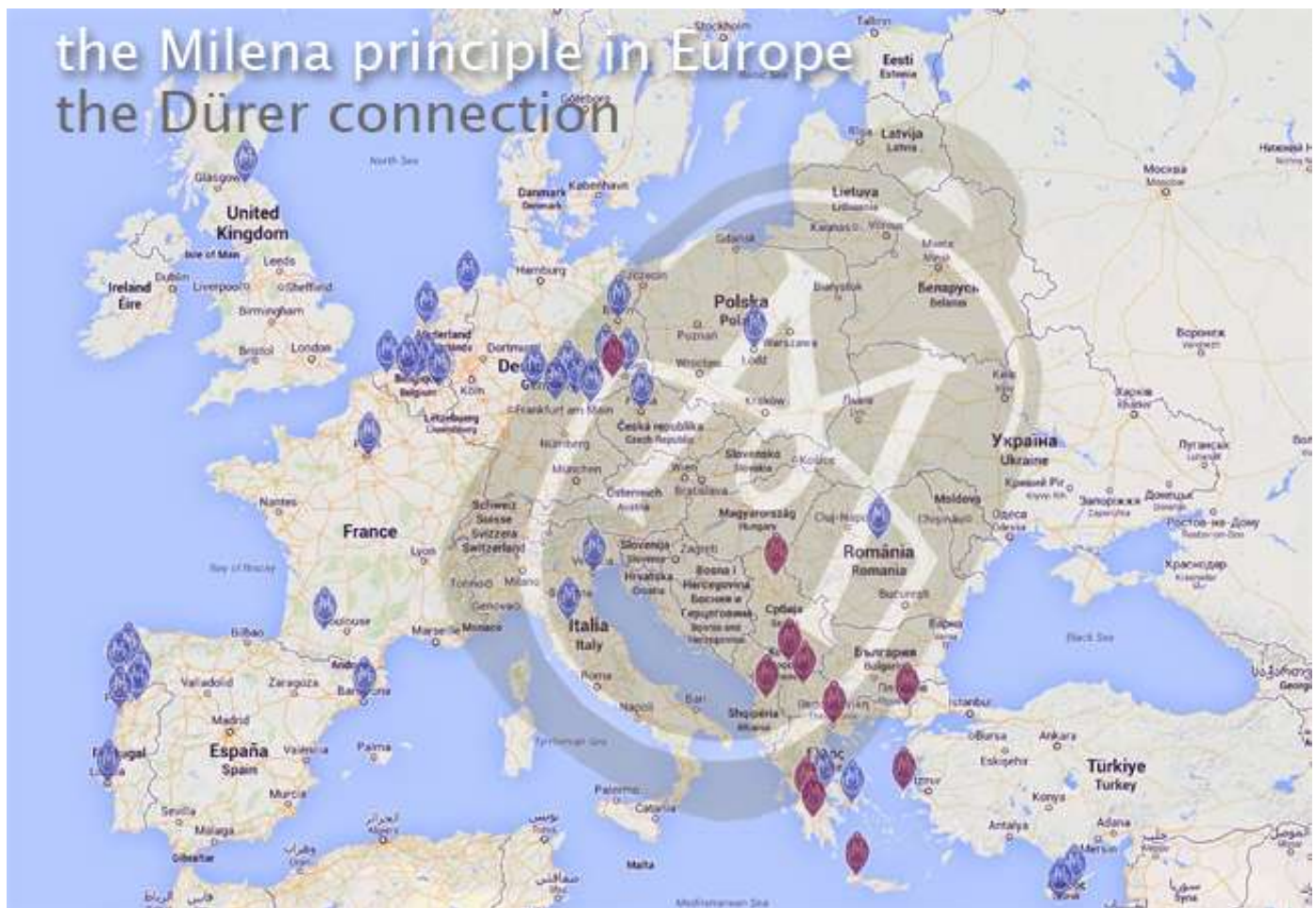
Gepäckträger Berlin Germany 2006.

Calle dei Amici Venice Italy 2005.

Friedrich Nietzsche Seminar Osmannstedt Germany 2005.

Eine Spur von Erinnerung (Joseph Beuys) Kassel Germany 2004.

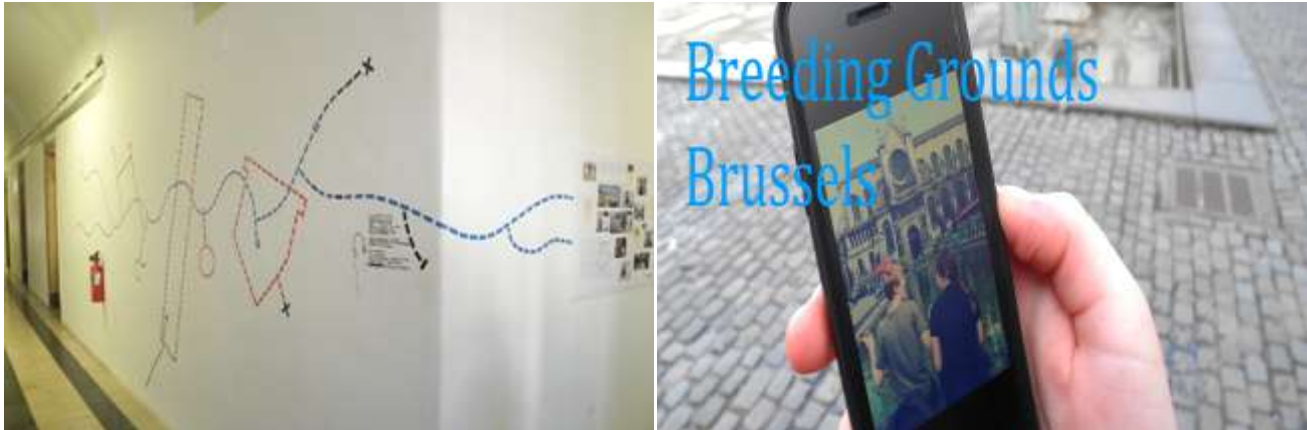
[Mapping our working space]



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

the Milena principle 2015

[Urban Rituals / resounding Cities] Lisbon Portugal 2015.



During the Athens Festival of Science – an installation will update the results of the three cities, next to walks with noTours during the exhibition "Arts and Science" 17 – 22 March (curator Christiana Kazakou), concluded with a presentation about noTours and of the process in Brussels, Lisbon and Athens on 22nd of March. Coordination by Geert Vermeire and the Athens workshop team. The project started with the first workshop and sound walk connecting the Katelijne Square in Brussels, the Largo do Carmo in Lisbon and the Monasteraki Square in Athens. A joint project with the Faculty of Fine Arts – University of Lisbon, metasitu:taf in Athens and RITS School of Arts Radio Department in Brussels.

In Brussels and Lisbon with Stefaan van Biesen, Geert Vermeire (the Milena principle) and Guy de Bièvre together with Amélie Van Campen, Karen Coppens, Sarah Mylle and Laurens Luyten, next to students of Rogerio Taveira, in Athens with Zoi Arvaniti, Sofia Grigoriadou, Maria Methimaki, Dāna Papachristou, Mariza Parasyri en George Samantas.

[Platform Projects] Art Athina Athens Greece 2015.



Curator Artemis Potamianou and the selection committee of Art Athina Platforms project 2015 selected the Milena principle as one of the 40 representative art platforms worldwide to showcase their work and collaborations in Lisbon and Athens.

the Milena principle presents together with befriended collectives and organisations in Lisbon and Athens a collaborative sound-and visual installation, demonstrating the effect towards other cities, through a network of artistic interventions with remote users from other cities.

The juxtaposition of artistic interventions and experiences of different urban environments suggesting the acknowledgement of coherence emphasized in the practices of everyday life-urban rituals, rather than the contrast implied by the geographical and cultural differences.



[B_Tour Festival] Leipzig Germany 2015.



Urban Sounds and Imaginary Spaces / Schauspiel Leipzig – B_Tour_Festival.

The artistic use of sound in urban interventions, creates imaginary spaces and conjures heterotopias.

Sound has the potential to challenge our everyday perception and inspire new kinds of social choreographies.

What is the political potential of sonic practices? How do they change our experience of the city? How can audio-tours facilitate different ways of relating to the urban space?

Starting from these questions, current developments of sound art in urban contexts will be discussed.

[Reading the moment] Athens Greece 2015.



Walking – Observing – Sensing – Being 'There is so much to discover in every step. The ordinary becomes extraordinary. Attention shifts to Awareness. Let's walk together and wonder around... We are the space we inhabit. Have we looked at it carefully? We move and so does our relationship with our world. Let's (re)encounter our place. We become the place'

Reading the moment is a collective walking experience through the street of Athens.

No other intention, no other expectation than experiencing place/space allowing our bodies to archive our version of the city.

Emerging from a spontaneous convergence of people, practices and ideas this initial exploration of Reading the moment is a collaboration among Geert Vermeire, Stefaan Van Biesen, and Marielys Burgos Meléndez.

A walkshop in the frame of Episodes of Urban Emptiness: Real and Imaginary Explorations of Silence in the Contemporary City. Edinburgh, Brussels, Athens.

[Sea Born] Le città invisibili ∞ Giudecca Venice Italy 2015.



In the old Renaissance city surrounded by the sea Geert Vermeire and Stefaan van Biesen did a performance 'Sea Born', a gesture of connection and resonance with the water of the city and between feeling bodies.

The Location was Giudecca in Venice where the Milena principle was the guest in the house of Valentina Genoa.

The following performances were documented: 'On the Surface', 'Unfolding the City' by Geert Vermeire [camera Stefaan van Biesen] and 'Sea Born' by Stefaan van Biesen and Geert Vermeire [camera Annemie Mestdagh. Also a talk in the house of Valentina Genoa in Giudecca was registrated: 'Sea Born Talk' by Annemie Mestdagh.

Geert Vermeire and Stefaan van Biesen made field recordings in Venice and later in Antwerp. They used this digital material to make a soundscape 'Hythlodæus 2015' for the Utopia sound project of Cities and Memory.

The theme was the map of Utopia made by Ambrosius Holbein in 1518. A part of this soundscape is included in the video.

[Unfolding the City] Campo San Pantalon ∞ Venice Italy 2015.



During the 'Sea Born' project of the Milena principle [Venice 2015], Geert Vermeire made a writing performance on Campo San Pantalon. Camera & video by Stefaan van Biesen. Third video in the ongoing series of performances, video's and soundscapes for "Invisible Cities" in Athens (Italian Cultural Institute Athens / Athens University) and "Utopia" (Cities and Memories project, Oxford). Video "Unfolding the city" by the Milena principle, Geert Vermeire & Stefaan van Biesen, Venice September 2015.

"The Invisible Cities", the most famous novel of the Italian writer, was first published in 1972 and takes us to fictive towns, where wishes, exchanges, memory, signs and things emerge as building stones of an urban society, reflecting about the contemporary urban culture. The event brings together scientists, academics and artists in a personal and material dialogue about imagination and contemporary urban society. With Annemie Mestdagh, Vermeire Geert & Stefaan van Biesen.

[Water Carrier] Athens Greece 2015.



A tea ritual as an utopic field of democracy [23d & 24d /10/2015]

We redefine the tea ritual on an artistic way as a philosophical and artistical meeting place, a resonating field of visual poetry and togetherness in a "politics of the heart", incorporating the utopic desire to a harmonious living together, an unconditional engagement in a field without distances, nor hierarchy.

It is the echo of a humane democracy that is lost in our world. The tea ceremony is multidisciplinary. Conversations, sound, soundscapes, smell, gestures are integrated.

Parallel events are a series of performances and talks based on the topic and an exhibition with a flux of drawings, prints and the video-performances "We wish we were like water" (Braga, Museu Biscainhos 2010), Writing in water (Venice Biennale 2007) and Liquid islands (Venice Biennale 2011) next to the video-poems "Antarctica" (Brasilia, 1a Feira Intercional do Livro / Museu Nacional).



On the occasion of 30 years since the death of Italian writer Italo Calvino (1923 – 1985), the department of Communication and Media of the University of Athens and the Italian Cultural Institute of Athens organize an interdisciplinary artistic and academic event called "Invisible Cities".

"The Invisible Cities", the most famous novel of the Italian writer, was first published in 1972 and takes us to fictive towns, where wishes, exchanges, memory, signs and things emerge as building stones of an urban society, reflecting about the contemporary urban culture.

The event brings together scientists, academics and artists in a personal and material dialogue about imagination and contemporary urban society. With Annemie Mestdagh Vermeire Geert & Stefaan van Biesen

A performance based on a tea ritual.

Conversations, soundscapes, smell, gestures are part of an alternating talk and performance focusing on the relation between water, writing and the city during an ad hoc temporary exhibition as a flow of drawings, prints, sounds and videos.

We redefine the tea ritual as a literary and artistical meeting place inspired by Venice and the (wordless) conversations between Marco Polo and Kublai Khan in the novel Invisible Cities of Calvino.

Limited places available, reservation via Eventora below for Saturday 24th.

Geert Vermeire and Stefaan van Biesen. Invisible Cities / Αόρατες Πόλεις at Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Atene. Coordinators: Maria Saridaki and Maria Vasileiou.

the Milena principle 2014

[The Meeting Place] Antwerp Belgium.



A network based on the nomadic aspect typical of the former renaissance artists, who did not only travel with their works throughout Europe, but also made connections with the places they visited.

Albrecht Dürer [1471–1528] visited 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.

Curator Artemis Potamianou (MOMA & Tate London), who is currently based in Athens, considers the Milena principle as one of the 40 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 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.

Exchange of ideas and continuous journeys created a network of solidarity and affinity. The projects refer to this utopian and human dimension, with traveling as an artistic instrument, with events and exhibitions realized in Europe, bringing artists and people from many European countries to Belgium.

[Water Carrier] an urban ritual ✕ Nogueira Da Silva Braga Portugal.



An art project in Museu Nogueira Da Silva in Braga Portugal and in various European cities with the underlying thought that we are water.

Central activity in Braga Portugal is an art performance based on a tea ritual.

Parallel event is an exhibition depicting a flow of drawings, prints and videos and an installation in the Museum Nogueira da Silva in Braga 2014.



[Breeding Grounds] Lisbon Portugal.

Meeting [08.10.2014] with Doris Hakim (Gr/Pal) (former international relations office–Erasmus at ASFA), Carlos Alcobia & Rogério Taveira [university Belas Artes Lisbon], Annemie Mestdagh (B), Stefaan van Biesen and Geert Vermeire.



A talk about developing new projects. The start of a process, new projects with students, lectures, workshops, urban interventions, exhibitions...

the Milena principle 2012

[Sinfo Saramago] an urban ritual ∞ Lisbon Portugal.



The Milena principle [Julie Snauwaert, Annemie Mestdagh, Filip Van de Velde, Geert Vermeire & Stefaan van Biesen], meeting Simona Vermeire [Sinfo Saramago – university Braga], Pilar de Rio, [director of the Saramago Foundation in Lisbon], Viviana González Diéguez [London] and Horacio González Diéguez [Escoitar.org Spain], Ana Clara Medeiros [Universidade de Brasília] and Augusto Rodrigues Niemar [Professor Adjunto de Literatura Brasileira at Universidade de Brasília].

An animated conversation on the Congress 'Sinfo Saramago' [15.12.2012] and later [17.12.2012] with the direction of the Fundação Saramago in Lisbon about the event

'Sensitive Islands' and 'SinfoSaramago', exploring new opportunities to connect contemporary art with the work of Saramago and with the ecological and social activities of the Foundation. Meeting with the direction of the Fundação Saramago at the Casa dos Bicos in a warm conversation about artistic collaboration in Lisbon.

Anna Sousa Dias, Rita Pais, director Sérgio Machado Letria, Juan José Cuadrado del Rio, [José Saramago Foundation], Ana Clara Medeiros & Augusto Rodrigues Niemar, Simona Vermeire.

A lecture about 'Sinfo Saramago' and 'Sensitive Islands' was given by Stefaan van Biesen & Simona Vermeire at Museu Nogueira da Silva, Braga Portugal, [19.12.2012].

the Milena principle 2011

[Growing Silence] Goethe-Institut Athens Greece.



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.

In the Goethe-Institut Athens the Belgian artists Stefaan van Biesen and Geert Vermeire were showing videos of performances and art projects in Germany [the Naumburg Variations and Grunewald Variations], next to an installation/performance made in Athens, documenting urban artistic interventions.

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.

[Approaching Silence] About Art Center Athens and ASFA Greece.



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.

[Divina Comedia] Dante seminar ∞ Jahnishausen Germany.



The Milena principle was invited by the Accademia Dantesca Jahnishausen for an artistic project in which renaissance and contemporary culture are connected.

The original Accademia was founded by King Johann of Saxony, who has translated Dante's Divine Comedy in Castle Jahnishausen. The King founded a group of artists, writers and experts, called the Accademia Dantesca, to discuss the work of Dante and to collaborate on an interdisciplinary way on this project.

Famous member were for example Carl Gustav Carus and Ludwig Tieck. The contemporary Accademia wants to restore this culture of dialogue with interdisciplinary meetings in the castle Jahnishausen. Goal is to initiate event linking the arts, culture and environment, as well working on the conservation and restoration of Castle Jahnishausen.

The castle will be a meeting place between artists, cultural experts and ecological and environmental workers and act as an interdisciplinary center with projects open to participation for a large public.

The Milena principle participated with Linda Ivens, Annemie Mestdagh, Geert Vermeire, Stefaan van Biesen and Walter Van Dam. 'Canto Indentro' [Canto I, the Hell] was a live performance of five speakers in five different languages of Canto I.

A special soundscape 'Passio' was made by Stefaan van Biesen for this event. Camera by Christian Hardt.



[Throwing Whispers] Gesture (VI) ∞ Urban ritual ∞ Braga Portugal.

Intervention by Annemie Mestdagh and Stefaan van Biesen, Largo S. Tiago in Braga Portugal 2011.

In the background several women complaining about the fact that it is forbidden by law to feed the pigeons of the city. A warm greeting to 'all sisters of mercy'.



An exhibition project by Stefaan van Biesen [the Go-between] in the Museums of Biscainhos and Nogueira da Silva in Braga during the Summer of 2011.

Several works of art were created in an artistic laboratory following on this event.

Drawings, attributes video and two installations with dresses, one in the garden of the Museum Biscainhos, 'the Space between', and one within the Museum Nogueira da Silva, 'the Promise', 'Birthmarks (I).

Also two urban interventions in the city of Braga by Annemie Mestdagh and Stefaan van Biesen: 'Throwing whispers' [an urban ritual] and 'the letter' were filmed and documented. 'the Letter' a write performance by Stefaan van Biesen in the garden of the Biscainhos museum Braga . Camera by Stefaan van Biesen.

[The Letter] the garden of the Biscainhos museum ∞ Braga Portugal.



In the historical garden of the Biscainhos Museum in Braga, Stefaan van Biesen did a writing performance that was registrated on video. 'The Letter', a letter to a scarecrow. Above are video stills of the performance. Camera by Annemie Mestdagh.

[Liquid Islands] an urban ritual ∞ Venice Italy.



the Milena principle proposed an intervention, 'Liquid Islands' [washing the feet of strangers], in the old Renaissance city surrounded by sea. Myriam Bosschem [Belgium], accepted and asked several people, who passed by, if she could wash their feet as an urban gesture of caring and making connection.

Starting in the early morning at Campo San Margherita, asking people to participate, finally she found a traveling couple from Norway who accepted the offer: Jette KJ Øigard and her husband Bjarne Bjerkeland.

The final location, where this unannounced event took place, was Campo San Zaccaria near San Marco, an old square where many people pass by.

This urban ritual took place in the evening near an old waterfountain. People stopped and wondered.

The Milena principle participated with Annemie Mestdagh, Ingrid Smeekens, Myriam Bosschem, Peter Maes [the colour U], Filip Van de Velde and Stefaan van Biesen. Camera Peter Maes, Annemie Mestdagh and Stefaan van Biesen.

the Milena principle 2010

[How long is now?] Braga ✕ Porto Portugal.



During July 2010 the Milena principle stayed in Braga in Portugal in the Nogueira da Silva Museum. Installations were shown in the Biscainhos museum and also in da Silva.

Stefaan van Biesen and Geert Vermeire did a performance.

Lectures were held in the Serralves Foundation in Porto, Show me gallery in Braga.

A presentation of our new projects in MARCO, the museum of contemporary art in Vigo Spain. Meeting Stephanie Brandt of Spacepilots London UK and the soundartists of Escoitar.org Spain.

[Embracing the landscape] Braga & Tibaes Portugal ∞ Santiago De Compostella Spain.



During the beginning of october 2010 the Milena principle gave a lecture in Braga Portugal in the Nogueira da Silva Museum where they stayed. Horacio Gonzales gave a lecture about Escoitar.org, soundartists in Spain. The journey ended in Santiago De Compostella in Spain. A meeting place for upcoming projects between Escoitar and the Milena principle in relation with out other European partners.

the Milena principle 2009

[The Marcilio Ficino connection] Firenze Italy.



In the course of 2009 the Milena visited Florence to follow the foot steps of Marisilio Ficino. The translation of the Corpus Hermeticum by Ficino on the order of Cosimo Di Medici caused an absolute change in the world view and in the way of thinking. Man was back in the centre of the universe as a mirror of the unspeakable. The human body becomes the standard unit to shape the world and the way of thinking. That trip was a greeting in time to Marcilio Ficino, the Renaissance scientist and Piero della Francesca, the timeless master.



the Milena principle 2007

[Luggage carrier (II)] Documenta Kassel Germany.



During this project 'bagagedrager' (= Luggage carrier) our thoughts got close to Joseph Beuys.

The making of a video interview with Rhea Thöngres-Stringaris, writer and intimate friend of Joseph Beuys, became the central activity.

The conversation was integrated in the Milena exhibition as a work of art just like 'the meeting table', discussions always held a central place.

the Milena principle 2006

[Gepäckträger] [How long is now?] Berlin Germany.



During the summer visit to Berlin the Milena were hosted by Brigitte Kalinowski at the Savignyplatz. During this visit several performances partly planned in advance took place and were photographed and filmed.

[We carry our paths (I)] The Grunewald variations ∞ performance.



Videostills from the performance 'Die Grunewald Variationen'. A seemingly endless thread made visible the path of a walker in the Grunewald forest in the vicinity of Berlin. It was a silent tribute to the deportees who left for an unknown and terrible place. A greeting, a gesture of commitment.

the Milena principle 2005

[The Naumburg Variations] Naumburg cathedral Germany.



+ [Friedrich Nietzsche Seminar ∞ Osmannstedt Germany 2005].

Auf den Spuren Friedrich Nietzsches von Röcken bis Weimar. Eine Veranstaltung der Weimar-Jena Akademie in Zusammenarbeit mit Invitare vom 06.–09.10.05.

In reply to the invitation of Ingrid Pee from Kassel to participate in the Friedrich Nietzsche Seminar that was held on the museum domain Wielandgut, Osmannstedt in Weimar with professor Dr. Friedrich Voßkübler of the University of Darmstadt and Dr. Frithjof Reinhardt, Weimar, Geert Vermeire and Stefaan van Biesen presented their 'philosophical path' to the participants of this seminar. Their artistic interventions were philosophical intermezzos. The magnificent cathedral of Naumburg formed the background of 'the Naumburg Variations', a 20 minute performance by Geert Vermeire and Stefaan van Biesen in which several participants took part.

[Calle dei Amici] Venice Italy.



Museo Goldoni Venetië 2005. performance Stefaan van Biesen en Geert Vermeire.

During the visit to the Biennale of Venice 2005, the Milena stayed in Casa Querini, an old renaissance building near the San Marco basilica. During this visit, several performances which had been planned in advance took place and were partly photographed and filmed. There was also an evening lecture on 'the bridge of encounters'. A nocturnal walk brought everybody together in the 'Calle dei Amici', a place which the Venetians call a magic place, a symbol of timeless friendship. Geert Vermeire brought a number of writing performances such as 'Bridge writer' on the Magdalena bridge, 'Writing in water' in the rising water of the Campo San Giorgio D. Greci and the northern Venetian channels of Cannaregio.

the Milena principle 2004

[Eine Spur von Erinnerung] Joseph Beuys ✕ Kassel Germany 2004.



In the tracks of Goethe and Nietzsche in Weimar, the Milena principle meet Ingrid Pee, artist, art lecturer and co-worker of the Bureau 7000 eiken (= Bureau of 7000 oak trees) of Joseph Beuys for Documenta 7 in 1982.

The garden of Ingrid Pee is very special. It contains an icon, a still witness of this project 7000 eiken (= 7000 oaks) of Beuys.

One of these oak trees with a basalt block by Beuys stands here like a cherished jewel. It was exceptionally given to her by friends with the special approval of the 'Bureau 7000 eiken' (= Bureau of 7000 oak trees) because of her efforts in maintaining valuable trees in her region.