

Dossier
Creation Nov/Dec 2023

Ballrooms

Andrew Graham | Co-production laGeste (Gent) & l'Autre Maison (Marseille)



Ballrooms 2023 | © Sofie De Backere

" An incredibly emotional and physical journey. An evolving community of emotional and physical intelligence, intimacy and challenge. An environment where experiences, traditions, expertise, expectations, surprises, encounters and diverse personalities merge. There is so much fun and energy in the air. A language without words. A weaving of fragile and uncertain boundaries of beauty and shimmering bodies shaping the space A vibration of distinct souls!"

Tijen lawton, dancer, choreographer

CONTEXT

In *Ballrooms*, Andrew Graham uses the ball to achieve two goals. He invents new dance forms by revisiting classic genre patterns, drawing inspiration from his own experiences in modern dance, ballroom dance (Chacha, Rumba, Samba, Jive) and queer culture (Waacking, drag performances).

At the same time, *Ballrooms* expresses the ambition to create a meeting place in the heart of the city through the ball, bringing together individuals whose paths would not spontaneously cross without *Ballrooms*.

By using the ball as a formal starting point, Graham creates a space in which a certain fluidity can be maintained in the role distribution, whether it concerns the one between performer and spectator, professional and amateur, rehearsal, improvisation, or presentations. The traditional theatrical context gives way to a space without hierarchy that encourages participation without being coercive.



Ballrooms 2023 | © Sofie De Backere

CO-CREATION et INCLUSION

Ballrooms is a unique artistic creation where encounter, creation and celebration come together to weave a new reality.

It consists of a protocol that can be easily obtained upon request from laGeste via morgan@lageste.be

The heart of *Ballrooms* is co-creation.

co-creation in three phases

1. outside the walls

Ballrooms aims to forge lasting links with marginalised groups. Therefore, an invitation week is dedicated to meeting and sensitising participants.

Two to three experienced artists lead workshops in 6 to 12 specialised organisations.

The workshops take place in a variety of venues, including schools, day centres, LGBTQIA+ or disability associations, folk dance clubs, para-sports teams, sex clinics and many others (to be determined in consultation with the host organisation).

The goal of these workshops is to engage participants for the week of co-creation that takes place in a recognized cultural space (museum, club, theater, ...).

2. co-creation

It consists of OPEN STUDIO and workshops led by experts who want to rethink their practice in a mixability context.

Participants feel invited after the artistic team has visited their institution/organization and can join at any time during the Open Studio week.

The Open Studio serves to develop with others, mini-performances based on experiences in workshops or their own expertise. These will be shaped at the end of the week into a form and sequence to be shared with an audience.



Ballrooms 2023 | © Sofie De Backere

3. the ball

A celebratory highlight

Ballrooms is a **vibrant, three-hour ball**, where participants become authors of and actors in their own creation, shared with an audience that in turn co-creates the party.

Ballrooms

laGeste & l'Autre Maison

An eclectic DJ mixes musical genres, creating a vibrant soundtrack for the exploration and discovery of different dance cultures. During the previous week, party design (scenography, lighting, video) has also developed. The 'rehearsal space' has turned into a playground where everyone can reinvent themselves, in an inviting environment that transforms with them during the ball.

The ball is a creative laboratory, where participants and audiences can explore new choreographic languages, mix styles and create unique dances. The co-creation week has produced some surprising hybrid performances, presented with passion and energy among the audience.



Ballrooms 2023 | © Sofie De Backere

An open dialogue

Ballrooms engages in an open dialogue with the host organisation. Together, we explore the themes of accessibility, inclusion and touch. We define the target audience and work together taking into account the specific needs and possibilities of the host organisation. The protocol serves as a guide.



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CREDITS

concept Andrew Graham

co-production laGeste (Gent, BE) en l'Autre Maison (Marseille, FR)

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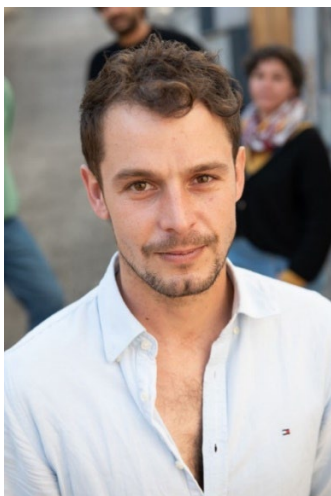
EXTRA INFORMATION

There have been 3 editions of *Ballrooms* in November and December 2023, at Studio laGeste in Ghent. And a first *Ballrooms* on relocation under the banner *Bal Amical.e* in Molenfest 2024, an organisation of Kanal and MB2030.

[Here](#) are a few atmospheric images and more info

DISCOVER ANDREW GRAHAM

Graham: 'My practice allows me to question my own ways of inviting, i.e. to understand the different ways I can relate to each person. It is about working on the basis of trust and choice, based on the needs of each individual. My aim is always to make my practice accessible, a practice, which is abstract, existential, physical, plural and deeply relational. It shows itself in creating practical and poetic movements, but also in developing relationships from body to body.'



[Andrew Graham](#)

HIS WORK IN THE PICTURE

Documentary *Alors ils dansent* (created on the occasion of *Parade*)

<https://vimeo.com/781535609>

Parade captation on demand at morgan@lageste.be

L' Autre Maison is a Marseille-based company that fights social exclusion in the cultural sector by creating conditions for greater diversity.

In a culture of contradictions and confrontations - normal/marginal, with/without disabilities, good/bad - their dream is a space where these differences become intertwined, creating bonds that are strengthened by the wealth and complexity of these differences.

www.cielautremaison.com

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