

Conclusion RAMMELFEST -MIN40 at THE TOWER in Amsterdam

During my own sound-art event called: Rammelfest min-40, I made a few fundamental choices to avoid a standard approach:

1. There was no stage or podium. The various acts were set up like a laboratory setting on the floor. Several block constructions were spread everywhere, on which the audience could climb, for a better view over the performances.
2. After each act, I deliberately let the atmosphere subside. Each artist got one hour of playing time, which usually wasn't used up. This left enough time to talk, make contact, or let what we had seen sink in.
3. There was no standard lighting with spotlights. Marco Broeders from Rotterdam is specialized in light objects. Because he arrived late, it was quite dark in the beginning. As time went on, he too arrived and turned on more and more light sources, so the atmosphere changed by the hour. The light consisted of grids of different colors that dynamically shifted over each other.
4. Most of the acts combined different art forms, such as dance, sound art, motion-controlled software, home-made instruments, theater, soundscapes, live cinema, and projected images. With this selection, I was able to show experimentation and hopefully provided inspiration by showing that even in forms of expression, boundaries can be stretched dynamically. We have different senses for a reason, and art forms can change as well.
5. The audience fanatically cut and pasted a large collage of pictures from a medical encyclopedia. We didn't have to explain anything, it went automatically. The interactive mechanical noise machines of Audiomachinist Geert Jonkers were also played fanatically. During the day there were a few children present, who even stayed. As the evening progressed, more noise appeared at the common sound-horizon.
6. The sound came from 4 sides, with a mixing console in the middle. We adjusted the mixer ourselves in the beginning of the event, and left the console unstaffed open and exposed in the middle of the room. No one from the audience had touched it during the whole event.
7. I tried to connect the artists with each other, by building a secretly backstage area, cooked some soup in the back of my car during dinner time, and distributed bread to escape expensive catering. It creates easily a connection, to do something which is actually forbidden. In the main time we had a lot of fun outside.
8. I let the artists choose where they wished to build up their setting. I did make a timetable, but didn't publish it. In this way preventing that visitors would only come for a certain act.
9. I asked a presenter who acted as a kind of poetic questioner. He was not supposed to ask directly about the how and the why of the choices of the artists, but tried to expose the side-roads and artistic quirks in the artist's mind.

I love to inspire others by consciously making different choices from time to time and thus showing that there are many more potential options than we originally assume. So I take it as a compliment that soon after the event, cow-sized letters were written on the Shell Tower: Make Some Noise. Perhaps this was in response to the Rammelfest I had organized in that place, who knows?

The festival went fantastic. All the artists thanked me personally and felt honored to be invited. Visitors were also very enthusiastic. As a learning point, next time I'm going to appoint more staff with specific tasks. For accompanying the artists inside, the technical connections and supplies per act;

I was on my own the reception committee, as well as troubleshooter, sound lady and cable-laying, directing lights and DJs, cash skipper, receipts and food delivery person for the artists, cleaned everything up, took tech away and wiped the floor clean.... Took care of all the PR, website and radio interviews....All of it, (Although 5 volunteers helped me, with the entrance and Roel assisted me during the whole event with cables and cleaning up) I even performed with my self-built instrument, which was actually a little bit too much to do on top of it all. Anyway, the festival was really a size larger than the previous Rammelfest. But now I know exactly what functions I can outsource next time.

Since the event lasted from 2 p.m. to 2 a.m., different audiences came and went. People with children during the day, art lovers at the end of the afternoon, and the party-people in the evening. This could coexist peacefully. The composition of the audience changed all the time, but continuously formed a sizable group. Even at dinner time, the space was well filled, something I did not expect.

A nice feature of the place was that everyone could move freely from inside to outside, to the bar in the other room, to sitting and relaxing out of direct loudspeaker range. The tower as a location as such worked out very well, a lot of people accidentally came by and stuck around. A nice compliment was that several artists tried out new things that had not been tested on stage before.

In summary, it was a huge success, that is eventually worth repeating, when I feel like it. And maybe next time with international input. The only downside of the event was the fact that a lot of people tried to pressure me into coming in for free. I didn't have a guest list, but every artist could bring 1 person. I stood my ground tightly, which wasn't always easy. But thanks to this policy, I managed to get the number of visitors I promised the AFK.

I would also like to thank the AFK for their contribution and support of my project. Without concessions to the concept, while maintaining my avant-garde and investigative approach, this festival could take place as I had envisioned it. I am grateful for this and consider it an acknowledgement of my views. I have been able to fulfill the plan to the fullest, to the benefit of all present!