



United in diversity – European Attitudes

photography
Ellie Uyttenbroek
Ari Verstuis
Exactitudes®

scenography
Olivier Boisson
NANAK
art

curator CAROLINE SIOBHAN RYAN^{art}

Photographic Studio
Rotterdam Centraal | July 14th to August 3rd 2008
Paris Gare du Nord | August 25th to September 15th 2008
Exhibition
Train Thalys | October 13th to December 31st 2008
Amsterdam | Rotterdam | Bruxelles | Paris | Cologne



THALYS 

How the sponsor has become a co-producer and a media space



Exactitudes®

‘United in Diversity’ *European Attitudes*

Studio photographique
Rotterdam Centraal | 14 juillet – 03 août 2008
Paris Gare du Nord | 25 août – 15 septembre 2008

Exposition finale
Train Thalys | 13 octobre – 31 décembre 2008
Amsterdam | Rotterdam | Bruxelles | Paris | Cologne

“Unis dans la diversité – Attitudes européennes” mettra en lumière l’identité européenne à travers une œuvre photographique et un geste scénographique. Cette exposition représente le tandem France | Pays-Bas de la Saison Culturelle Européenne, qui a lieu du 1er juillet au 31 décembre 2008 durant la Présidence française de l’Union Européenne. Le tandem constitué des photographes néerlandais Ari Versluis et Ellie Uytenbroek – Exactitudes, et du scénographe français Olivier Boisson – Nawak & Ventilo, a été réuni sur une proposition de Caroline Siobhan Ryan – PiArt.

Ludique et citoyen, il se déploie autour de trois lieux emblématiques de l’Europe et de la mobilité : les gares de Rotterdam Centraal et Paris Nord puis le train Thalys. Sur une période de six semaines, les voyageurs et autre public sont invités à se faire photographier au cœur des gares. De cette rencontre artistique et publique naîtra une série de six œuvres photographiques, révélant les visages de l’identité européenne. Elles feront l’objet d’une exposition exceptionnelle, à travers le “pelliculage” d’un train Thalys qui circulera à travers l’Europe du 13 octobre au 31 décembre 2008.

Cette exposition itinérante sera un moment de retour vers le public sollicité, photographié, interrogé. Elle donnera “à voir” cette identité européenne en la rendant concrète et vivante.

Photographie
Ellie Uytenbroek, Ari Versluis

Scénographie
Olivier Boisson

Commissaire de l’exposition
Caroline Siobhan Ryan

Photographic Studio
Rotterdam Centraal – July 14th to August 3rd 2008
Paris Gare du Nord – August 25th to September 15th 2008

Exhibition
Thalys train – October 13th to December 31st 2008
Amsterdam | Rotterdam | Bruxelles | Paris | Cologne

“United in Diversity – European Attitudes” makes alive the European identity. This event represents the France-Netherlands Tandem of the European Cultural Season, organized during the French Presidency of the European Union (July 1st – December 31st, 2008). From the interaction between Dutch photographers Ari Versluis & Ellie Uytenbroek – Exactitudes, and French scenographer Olivier Boisson – Nawak & Ventilo, will emerge six photographic series revealing the common identities which make European citizenship. This artistic Tandem was united following a proposal by curator Caroline Siobhan Ryan - PiArt.

This event revolves around three locations symbolising Europe and mobility: Rotterdam Centraal and Paris Nord train stations, and the Thalys train. Over a period of six weeks, travellers and other members of the public will be invited to be photographed in a studio and exhibition space set up in the stations. The final work will be exhibited on a Thalys train travelling in Europe from October 13th to December 31st, a world premiere...

This travelling exhibition will be a moment of “giving back” to the public questioned, photographed... It will be a moment of revelation of this European identity, making it concrete and alive.

Photography
Ellie Uytenbroek, Ari Versluis

Scenography
Olivier Boisson

Curator
Caroline Siobhan Ryan



Manifestation organisée dans le cadre de la Saison culturelle européenne en France
(1er juillet – 31 décembre 08)

This event is supported by the European cultural Season, organized during the French Presidency of the European Union
(July 1st – Dec 31st, 2008)



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The Team

THALYS 

- Armelle Weber, Partnerships manager, Thalys
- Caroline Siobhan Ryan, Cultural Agent, Pi Art – Curator of the project

The project

- > French-Dutch tandem of the European Cultural Season - French Presidency of the European Union
(July 1st - December 31st, 2008)
- > Interaction between Dutch photographers (Ari Versluis and Ellie Uyttenbroek) - Exactitudes and a French scenographer (Olivier Boisson Nawak & Ventilo)
- > The concept: revealing the common identities which make European citizenship
- > A proposal by curator Caroline Siobhan Ryan - Pi Art : she knows the corporate world
- Originally 2 locations involved symbolising Europe and mobility : photo studio in Rotterdam Centraal and Paris Nord...soon 3 locations...

The result..A World Premiere!

United in Diversity – European Attitudes

People casted in the station and invited to be photographed in the studio

> Final work presented on the Thalys....**The first exhibition to travel at 300km/h!**



Why we dared...

- > In line with Thalys cultural partnership policy developed over the last 5 years
- > Thalys approached by Culturesfrance to become a sponsor of the European Cultural Season
- > Exactitudes concept emblematic of Thalys : brings Europe's citizens closer together, Europe on the move, image of European diversity
- > Matches Thalys territories with 2 Dutch photographers, 1 French architect and a visibility over 4 countries
- > Contemporary art very close to Thalys values : accessible to all, core values of modernity, innovation, audacity and creativity



Expectations

- > Thalys confirms its role and commitment in promoting intercultural projects towards 2 groups
 - Corporate: Thalys actor in the European Cultural Season, with Orange, Electrabel Suez, Air France...
 - Public : original projects, new messages,
- > Increased visibility and awareness for the brand and product
- > Thalys as a true "player" in art, making it accessible to the largest number of Europeans
- > Thalys contributing to Europe "on the move"



It sounded so easy....!

... From one classic sponsoring request, Thalys chose to go a step further to make the project more impactful :

- > Higher financial direct investment
- > Logistical support
- > Political support
- > Co-production role
- > Communication involvement



Why...?

...THE encounter!

- > Thalys team and its Management met very early in the project with the artists and the curator
- > This encounter brought new ideas and wishes from all parties
- > Photographers naturally inspired by train environment
- Obvious that Thalys had to play a more active part in this European project created in the public sphere



A cultural chock!

- The art world is not familiar with the railway environment
- A big cultural change internally - and once started, difficult to step back...
- Thalys moved from a well-known situation as a sponsor to a new one as a co-producer
- At the same time a big media tool generating huge media attraction and exposure
- (being the exhibition location)
- We did not foresee all the implications and issues...
- We had to be pro active and full of resources!

Technical aspects

A complex format : 3 locations, 2 countries, 2 cities...

- > Authorization to build the studios in the train stations
- > Security, safety constraints and procedures
- > Very tight planning throughout the projectand even more when strikes and incidents !
- > A printer to find
- > A train to cover

Artistic Visions

- > European identity as seen by the photographers
- > United in diversity – European attitudes a true **artistic** project and NOT a commercial coverage
- > European message delivered by the European Cultural Season
- > Thalys Image and messages to the public



Official Aspects – politics and protocol

- > Need to activate contacts at very high levels (SNCF, chairman's network; Mayor of Rotterdam, Dutch and French Foreign ministries)
- > Liaise with national representatives : embassies, institutions, ministries
- > Project part of an official and institutional program (European Cultural Season) – communication and planning to follow

Internal implications

- > Very transverse project for Thalys with the involvement of general management, communication, PR, legal, finance, operations and railways services, onboard services, route management, web team...
- > Non stop "seduction" work with the internal teams involved
- > Two dedicated person for nearly a year in house + curator: necessity to re "think" the whole planning of projects
- > A dedicated budget that nearly tripled / initial commitment



Return on investment

Negative sides

- > Project very "touchy" and difficult to implement – many political constraints
- > Long planning (more than a year) – difficult to keep people (internally and externally) motivated
- > Budget crisis – need to make arbitration and cuts (e.g. in the communication plan)
- > Coordination difficult between communication players (Thalys, communication agencies, media...)
- > Media coverage slow to take off
- > Message and project difficult to explain : complex format



Return on investment

Positives sides

- > Strong “wake up” of the press with the first circulation of the Thalys (October 13, 2008)
 - > Media influenced by influential media
 - > Media “Head over Heels”
 - > Very large media coverage (press, magazines, radio, web, TV)
 - > Original artistic project : recognition of Thalys as a true cultural player (not only commercial)
 - > Socio-cultural message (common identities): strong feeling of “recognition” among the public and the media
 - > A story that continues to grow...



Final words and future...

- > Beautiful encounters
- > Exciting projects
- > Too radical for Thalys?
- A unique experience?
- Find the right match and build a story together
- > Obtain support and implication at VERY high level and at all levels (internally and externally)
- Do not be discouraged
- > Re consider standard procedure and process
- > Be flexible and creative

