



Welcome to the Magdalene Church!

In accordance with the annual tradition YOT presents an artistic project during the summer in the Magdalene Church. This summer we transform the church into

PLAYING SPACE

between question and answer

Questions and answers, the two are often mentioned together in the same breath. Without questions, no answers. Can all questions be answered? Can a question convey more than one answer? Are there answers without questions?

Let us start with the question: **What is a question?**

One recognizes a question by its question mark, by its interrogative pronoun, by the intonation or by the inversion in the sentence. Questions can be debatable or non-debatable or being asked as multiple choice questions. There are rhetorical questions (i.e. is the Pope Catholic?), questions that induce something (why: Yes or no) and informative questions (who is that or when will you come?)

A question is more than a punctuation mark or formula. It indicates that we encounter our limits, the boundary of our knowledge or possibilities. Directing your attention to the other with that lack of knowledge, is not that the essence of a question?

Asking questions activates the motion, the back-and-forth between people.

**This summer the Magdalena Church is
the pre-eminent performance space
where the movement of questions
and thus also the symbol of the swing
take central stage**

NO ANSWERS BUT AN ALLY

In the Bible, at different places, clear questions are being asked.

Think of the following passages:

Moses at the bramble bush: "What is your name?"

Pilate to Jesus: "Are you the King of the Jews?"

God in creation myth: "Adam, where are you?" Or to Cain: "Where is your brother?"

Jesus to his disciples: "Who do men say that I am?"

However, it is remarkable how few questions are actually answered. The reader is challenged to formulate an answer himself: The questions are a type of blank exercise for oneself. The answer is being delayed to engage the reader.

In Jewish tradition rabbis tried to find the ultimate truth. If it existed, then they assumed that it would be found in the middle of the TORAH. They literally started counting all the words in order to find the word exactly in the middle. And guess what? There is no word in the middle. Because you count as many words in the left part as in the right part. So you find in the middle only an open space. But the last word of the first part appears to be the same word as the first word of the second part and that is 'to search'.

The Bible and also the Gospel say by this, there is no right answer or an ultimate truth. But read and live and search. The one who asks questions is searching and it is in this quest that people meet each other.

The Bible therefore handles questions differently than e.g. the Greek philosopher Socrates and his maieutic. Socrates claims that everyone knows the answers and a master, by asking the right questions, gives birth to **the truth**. (maieutic means literally: The skills of the midwife).

God does not join in there, but promises to come along. Is this not most important by a mission impossible? **No noncommittal, impersonal answers to questions in the Bible, but a promise of alliance.**

CREATIVE THINKING AVANT LA LETTRE

It is remarkable how Jesus handled questions that were asked to put him to the test. In this hostile confrontation Jesus often responds with a **parable or an allegory**.

Well known is the preamble of the parable of the wounded man:

Luke 10, 25

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus.

"Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"



²⁶ "What is written in the Law?"
he replied. "How do you read it?"

²⁷ He answered: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your strength
and with all your mind and,
love your neighbour as yourself."

²⁸ "You have answered correctly,"
Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself,
so he asked Jesus: "**And who is my neighbour?**"

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down
from Jerusalem to Jericho,
when he was attacked by robbers..."

Still stronger is the question about the adulterous women:

John 8, 3

³ The teachers of the law and the Pharisees
brought in a woman caught in adultery.
They made her stand before the group

⁴ and said to Jesus: "Teacher, this woman
was caught in the act of adultery.

⁵ In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women.
Now what do you say?"

⁶ They were using this question as a trap,
in order to have a basis for accusing him.

Here the long silence is the answer.

After insisting Jesus says: "Whoever is without sin casts the first stone."

Again more than half an hour of silence, until one person leaves the circle without casting a stone.

Jesus refuses to deal with A or B thinking, in black or white. He turns the situation fully around to a new question or a metaphor for an answer. In that way he is one of the greatest creative thinkers of his time. The out-of-the-box principle is not an invention of our time, but has its roots deep in our own tradition.

THE ARTIST'S VIEW A SWING?

Pieter Verbeke: "The swing symbolizes the movement between question and answer. That short (or long) time you hover between the two. It elicits serenity, serenity that gives you time to move, accompanied by music or silence, towards a question or answer. The seat is therefore a small island, among other small islands. Sometimes you have to be on your own and cut off to really form an answer. It also loosens nostalgia. Up to the swing in the garden or in the park. When it was all much simpler. At the time of discovery and asking."

THE ARTIST'S VIEW A WRITING DESK?

Pieter Verbeke: "The writing desk is an expanded guest book where people can write about their experience with the installation, or whatever they want to get rid of. Or give answers to questions that others have written down. To make drawings. The roll of paper full of words which remains after the exhibition is again a new work. A "scripture" written by people from around the church and worldwide. A collection of endless questions and answers from whom we get to see only a glimpse of their story. "

PLAYING SPACE - BETWEEN THE QUESTION AND ANSWER

is an initiative of YOT non-profit organization, the laboratory for outlook on life, connected with St. Magdalene Church in Bruges. Every summer YOT introduces a project at the intersection of heritage, art and spirituality. This project came about thanks to a collaboration between YOT and the illustrator Pieter Verbeke. Thanks to the many volunteers.

Are you eager to give a little something back?

You can put your contribution in our money collector. We are eternally grateful!

You will find more information about YOT non-profit organization at the information board at the back wall or at www.yot.be - info@yot.be - 050 / 33.68.18

Saint Magdalena Church – Bruges

From June 27 including September 30
every day from 10 am to 01 pm and from 02 to 06 pm

not on Sunday mornings

free admission

more information: www.yot.be

With support of the Municipal Cultural Services of the city of Bruges

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