



EXHIBITS

Leen Van Tichelen

Onder Verzachtende Omstandigheden

17.09.2025 – 05.10.2025

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Good evening Leen, My text is starting to take shape. It's becoming a pure projection: of everything I see in the works, and how I've experienced them. An invitation to freedom, for the viewers. They too are allowed to be mistaken in their interpretations—just as I am. Thank you, Leen, for creating such a powerful and liberating work.

○ WhatsApp message from Simon Delobel to Leen Van Tichelen, 15.09.2025, 21:49

A curator is generally expected to know (almost) everything about the work they present. Because they have closely followed the creative process, witnessed the work's development, held conversations with the artist, and taken the time to be genuinely affected by the works. They are also expected to transfer that knowledge into a written text—as a guide for the viewer. But whether that is truly desirable, remains an open question.

What happens when the curator 'abuses' their position by deliberately withholding part of their knowledge? When they choose not to give a full explanation, but instead allow their own projections onto the work to speak? Could such an act be seen as an invitation to the viewer—to think, to feel, and to make meaning for themselves? Are there then mitigating circumstances to forgive them for this?

○ If I truly wanted to guide you well, I would tell you that Ghent-based artist Leen Van Tichelen used the Anatomical Theatre at **KIOSK** as a studio in July and early August, to create new work. That she then collaborated with performer Fanny Vandesande, composer Esther Coorevits, and word artist Jonas Bruyneel. That a first performance took place on August 23rd, and a second on September 17th, the opening day of this exhibition. And that you are warmly invited to attend the third and final performance, on the day of the finissage: October 5th.

If I truly wanted to guide you well, I could tell you that Leen Van Tichelen works with materials she encounters in her everyday environment. That she sawed her tabletop into pieces to create the sticks brought to life by Fanny Vandesande during her dance. That the planks leaning against the wall for the performance, and later lying on the

floor, came from a relative's garden. Sharing such details, seemingly anecdotal, might offer you a first glimpse into the economy of Van Tichelen's practice. One could refer to the etymology of the word "economy": oikonomía, the management of the household. One could speculate about connections with memory, transmission, and generations.

But instead, I would rather tell you about the thoughts and associations that surfaced while I attended the performance *GROUND ZERO / 51.04536 / 3.71609* on August 23rd. The title alone evoked something ominous. *GROUND ZERO*: the point on the ground directly beneath an explosion. For many of us, it is inseparably linked to the attacks of September 11, 2001: a collective trauma, a moment when the world seemed to tilt forever.

51.04536 / 3.71609: the GPS coordinates of **KIOSK**. As if the space itself had been marked as a target. A place where something could happen. Or already had. A site where the ground itself began to speak. What unfolded felt like the beginning of an unknown apocalypse. Not spectacular or loud, but slow, silent, embodied. As if we were witnessing a world rewriting itself. A strange beauty, born from uncertainty.

The sight of the wooden planks suddenly took me back to the trenches of the First World War, to the improvised solutions of soldiers trying to escape mud, cold, and death. But just as vividly, I saw fragments of today's trenches in Ukraine—through drone footage and late-night news reports. Some objects, titled *HAND TOOL* and carefully displayed on a shelf in the main space, made me think of hand grenades. Small, tangible, loaded with potential action.

Like in a library, where books can be selected, opened, and read, it felt as though I was invited to get to work: to remove the red pins from the fabric, to draw lines. Lines? No: borders. Dividing lines. Markings. Like a game, or a threat. Suddenly, the space became something to be partitioned. Cut into pieces. And the other viewers, co-travelers in this fragile choreography, would sooner or later have to choose: which side of the border are you on?





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At the center of the space: purple-colored sandbags, stacked in a straight line and supported by a metal structure. Again, war scenarios came to mind: barricades, defensive constructions, improvised protection against an impending threat. But at the same time, it became something else. A symbol, perhaps, for all the walls being erected today. Border walls, concrete barriers that block the free movement of people between nation-states. A monolith. Unyielding. Unbearably heavy. Seemingly immovable.

And yet. Just as my thoughts filled again with a flicker of hope, I saw something else: the possibility of dismantling that construction. Bag by bag. Not alone, but together, with everyone present in the space. A collective act. A symbolic dismantling. It never came to that. The space of art, and the inviting vulnerability of the work, was respected. But the idea that it could happen, that the border is not absolute, lingered.

Maybe that's exactly what Leen Van Tichelen does: not offering explanations, but opening spaces. Not answers, but situations in which meaning unfolds slowly, bodily, collectively. Her work does not ask for interpretation, but for closeness. Patience. Attention. Perhaps the curator, in such a context, must also become more restrained. Less of a guide, more of a witness. Someone who saw something happen, and doesn't yet fully have the words—but tries to share it anyway, in the hope that you recognize something. Or see something else. What I do know for certain: In the space that Van Tichelen constructs, something resonates. The possibility of a shared gesture.

Simon Delobel, 17.09.2025

Onder Verzachtende Omstandigheden

The result of a summer residency at KIOSK at the invitation of Simon Delobel

Timeline

April/May - creation edition *DUAL ROLE* at Studio LVT
June - preparation material at Studio LVT
July - creation new works at KIOSK
August - activation new works under the name

GROUND ZERO /51.04536/3.71609

in collaboration with
performer Fanny Vandesande
word artist Jonas Bruyneel
composer Esther Coorevits

Documentation by Megan Briggs

with creative help from Mie Van Uffelen, Camille Dochy, Stefaan Van Dorpe

with support from Thomas Peeters, Sam Van Ingelgem, Sara Plantefève-Castrick, Uncle Wellington's Wives vzw, BASE vzw

performances at KIOSK
Louis Pasteurlaan 2, 9000 Ghent

23.08, 18u - try out at Bijloke Wonderland Festival
17.09, 18u - performance opening exhibition
Onder Verzachtende Omstandigheden
05.10, 16u - performance finissage exhibition
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Thanks to Isabelle Arthuis, Lien Van Leemput, the KIOSK Saviours, and the whole team of KASK & CONSERVATORIUM School of Arts Ghent.

Supported by:





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