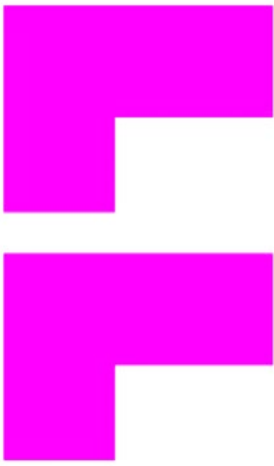


# THE AMSTERDAM FRINGE METHOD



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## THANKS FOR YOUR INTEREST IN THE AMSTERDAM FRINGE METHOD!

After running the festival for 18 years, we have taken the time in 2024 to slow down, think and reflect on our working method; How do we connect to artists? Why is diversity so crucial for the arts? What does it mean to work on the fringes of the arts, of stories and the city? How do we lend artists a hand to take the next step in their professional careers?

With the help of writer Simone Zeefuik (<https://lazeefuik.com/bio-and-contact-info/>) and visual artist Lamiae El Hajjaji (<https://lameiae.com/>) we have translated our methodology into a map that guides you through your brainstorm in a playful way. A moderator for your conversation, in game form.



### FOR WHO?

For people interested in how to work within the arts, with an open mind.

For people who are willing to evaluate their ways of work or want to start brainstorming.

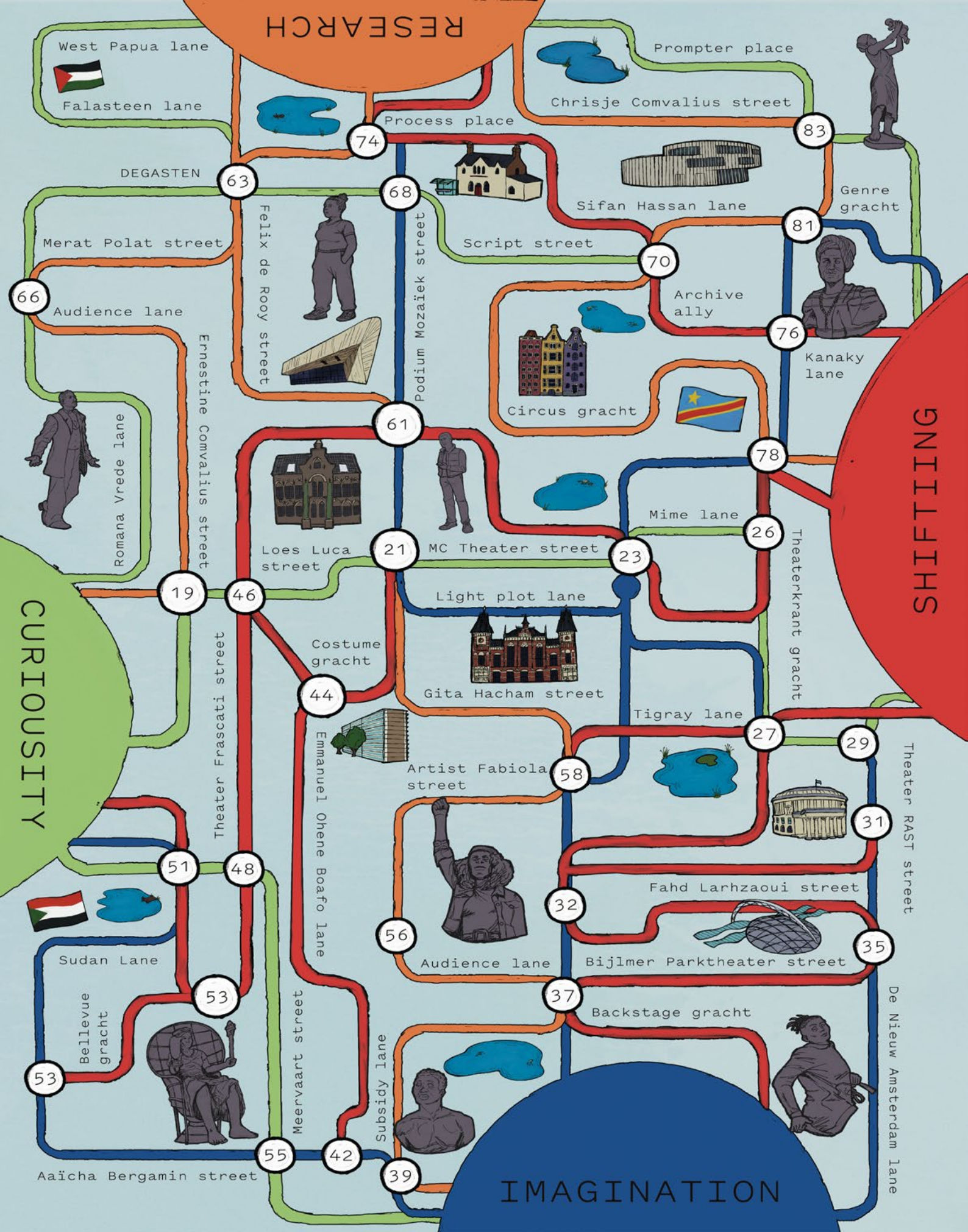
For artists, people behind the screen, funds, leaders, students, and other interested parties.

### WHY ARE WE OFFERING THIS METHOD FOR FREE?

We feel the urgency to move towards an arts scene in which working in an inclusive way is a matter of fact. This needs work, needs re-thinking your practice and needs tools in order to make steps. With this game, we hope to give you tools to evaluate your practice in a playful way. You decide when you get to the finish line.

Let's play!





## HOW TO USE THIS MAP

This map is the imagined representation of our methodology. More specifically, it's an invitation for interested parties, theatre directors, technical staff, artists, policy makers, costume designers, marketing wizards and other enthusiasts to come stroll or roll with us.

On this page, you can download the map and the associated elements (player cards, questions to be answered, audio files) to start playing the game.

Please do not expect to find a ready-to-use manual on how to start a festival, because this answer is different for everyone.

Use the map and game as a symbolic depiction of finding one's way. And, of learning that ways, like conversations and time, are often non-linear.

## WHEN TO USE THIS MAP

As you can see in the images here, there are several players you can choose from: The Curious One, The Shiftin' One, The Imaginative One and the Researching One. You choose which one of those fits you best.

You can use the map as a brainstorm whenever you want to start a project, rethink your own way, start a collaboration, need to get over a writer's block, or whenever you want to challenge yourself to think outside of your bubble.

In order to take these brave steps, we lend you a hand by inviting you to slow down, to answer questions which can help you broaden your perspectives.

Play this game alone or with others. Pause the game whenever you want, because some questions need more time to find the right answer to.

## I WANT TO KNOW MORE

Are you interested in how Amsterdam Fringe works in practice? For instance, what is our vision on performing arts, how do we select shows, how do we create How2Fringe workshops, which partners do we choose, etc? Contact us! We're more than happy to share our experience and start a conversation with you.

You can contact Fringe director Farnoosh Farnia directly:

[farnoosh@amsterdamfringe.nl](mailto:farnoosh@amsterdamfringe.nl)

## I WANT TO RECEIVE THE FULL PACKAGE

If you want to play the game and use the method and you don't want to print the documents below, send us an email with your address, and we will send you everything by mail for free (we only charge you for the stamps).

You can contact Fringe director Farnoosh Farnia directly:

[farnoosh@amsterdamfringe.nl](mailto:farnoosh@amsterdamfringe.nl)



## Track 1:

# IMAGINE IT'S A CITY

You are here.

Which isn't always a given and which often, if not continuously, requires work. You are here. And yes, sometimes even the generic statements on the most ordinary map can feel like they're demanding a certainty you're not even sure of. Then, at least, you are. But, maybe you are sure. Sure-sure. And, the thing you're sure of is that you'd like to move around your 'here'. Play with it. Redefine it. Or, perhaps, claim the whole space as part of your process and, therefore, of your 'here'.

## You-who

For all the you's that are and whose 'here' includes Amsterdam Fringe Festival, we created a city map. This map is the imagined representation of our methodology. More specifically, it's an invitation for the volunteers, theater directors, technical staff, artists, policy makers, costume designers, marketing wizards and other enthusiasts to come stroll or roll with us.

We choose the language of 'moving' and 'rollers-and-strollers' to emphasize that 'by foot', 'walking', etc. aren't the only ways to navigate a city. Whether you roll or stroll, we want you to take your time. Consider a soft pace. Pause over here, slow down over there. We intend this to be a journey where both the institutionally trained and the autodidacts can cross paths. These paths are constructed to spark considerations and conversations. Through the four Players that are the rollers-and-strollers of the map, folks are invited to think deeply about the different processes on which this centre of the Dutch theater landscape is built.

Our methodology is based on a merging of artistic processes that center *curiosity, research, imagination and shifting*. By imagining this combination of processes as a city, we're paraphrasing a beautiful invitation by the Menahan Street Band: to make the road by moving. In this case, the road is a 'figuring out' of positionalities, possibilities, responsibilities and yes... of vulnerabilities. On this map, we intend to symbolize how the different disciplines and professions in Amsterdam's world of theater can cross paths. And, not just when it's showtime. Instead, we focus on how we can all benefit from understanding, unlearning, relearning and remixing our ways of working.

May we all cross paths.



## Track 2:

# WHEN, NOT WHY

The climate crisis, worrying election outcomes, war crimes and other oppression related terrors **are all** much more important than our map. Which makes any invitation that sounds like: “Why you must use this map!” sound rather oblivious and vain. With everything, everywhere, all at once being so much more than a movie title, we understand that another “must” can be entirely too much. So, instead of discussing why you must use this map, we’d like to mention when you can use it.

Use it as a reconsideration tool: for the people working at the funds and those who apply for them, it offers ways to rethink the vocabularies they use to talk, write and read about theatre. For those of us who are on and/or behind the scenes, it offers a similar invitation: to think deeply about the language we use. Use it as a symbolic depiction of finding one’s way. And, of learning that ways, like conversations and time, are often non-linear. We go left, go back, turn around, pause, choose again... Approach it as a representation of possibilities. That one question you keep coming across in your daily practice? Perhaps it has different answers. All those different ideas that present themselves to you during your process? The ones that seem scattered and not linked to each other? Maybe even the ones that feel like useless distractions? Or, they all feel equally important and now you don’t know what to do first? They might all be rooted in that one thing you’ve wondering about. Depending on what you need from it, you can use this map to both filter and merge the different elements of your process and practice. Think of it as an illustration of how curiosity, research, imagination and shifting are needed on all levels of our performing arts sector.

What’s in it for you is that it offers a haste-minimizing approach to having to produce something. This something can be a report, a play, a marketing text, an application for an open call... anything that, when you don’t take the time to properly pour into it, runs the risk of being hollow. We see this in the form of buzzwords and the ways in which they can fill up descriptions with nothingness. Or, when we rely too much on Otherness or other elements of shock-and-awe to properly develop what it is we’re trying to tell, what it is we’re asking. Our intention with this map is to encourage a reappraisal of the Quiet, of the ‘sitting with’. And, by doing so, offer a humble perspective on where to position oneself in the artistic genealogy of the themes and topics one wants to address.



### Track 3

## HOW TO USE THE MAP

We designed this map in such a way that each of these four points can function as a point of departure, a route and a destination. By doing so, we invite **you** to not just engage and produce in multidisciplinary ways... but, to consider what could be the result of a merging of disciplines and processes. Perhaps, like the Zimbabwean writer NoViolet Bulawayo said, we need new names. New names to match the (re)imagined coming-togethers of the different ways in which we approach, discuss, make and see theater.

The first step to using the map is taking your time to take a close look at it and/or listen to the detailed description of what's on it. Is there a name of a lake, statue, building, or street that speaks to you? Somewhere on the left top or in the right corner... Feel free to start there.

Or, you can start from one of the four foundational places. Because we want these points to also be able to function as route, destination and starting point, we stay away from giving any of them these labels. Instead, we use the term 'foundational' place as a reminder that these are building blocks.

**Each foundational place, lake, statue, building or street or station from where you're starting, comes with a question. Each answer brings you to a next stop. We suggest strolling until the next foundational place but, if a question or answer inspires you to work on or further think about something... please prioritize that.**

As we're not talking about 'starting points', we also shy away from variations of 'being done'. Because we invite you to consider your work process to be an ongoing conversation, we'd like to say 'pause'.



### Track 4

## THE ROUTES

**Our map offers different routes** and countless possibilities to shift between them. Because we strongly believe that curiosity, imagination, research and shifting are concepts that are constantly in conversation with each other, we want the map to represent that. Our hope is that the questions raised and the answers given offer insights to one's work and the



position from which it is made. This position can be an artistic, political or social one but also, and very much so, a professional one. For example: Perhaps what your story needs isn't an actor but a writer. Or, not a musician but more of an emphasis on light or stage design. Or, how to connect your artistic vision to the ones of your partners and colleagues?

**We're not in a position to record 50-something audio tours but we like to give at least three examples of how the routes work.**

### **The Players**

So, here we are: strollers and rollers, people who take their time to find their ways. There are four characters so you can, as the gamers would say, choose your player. Rather than an actual person, your player is an amalgamation of the different people and personalities we have come across in our years as Fringe:

#### **- The Curious One.**

For your stroll, you've been handed a set of clip-on wings. The colour, perhaps colours, of the feathers is yours to imagine. The wings are a reference to the Erin Hanson poems where she wonders: "What if I fall/ Oh my darling, what if you fly?" Isn't that what curiosity boils down to: questioning the possibilities of what will happen if you choose to go beyond what you know?

#### **- The Researching One**

You're traveling with a device that is an audio/e-book, search engine and digitized archive all in one. If you're not a nerd in the best ways of the word then you at least enjoy a good nerd-session, a proper deep-dive into the material you have in mind. You know your topic and you want to study it (more).

#### **- The Imaginative One**

You're strolling with a set of large but very light keys. Trust us, they're not heavy at all! Thinking of how Toni Morrison described imagination as access to the world, realities, etc. of which she has no data, no documents, etc., these keys symbolize your access to different layers of your topic(s).

#### **- The Shiftin' One**

Again, we're working with super light materials here so don't worry: you're strolling with a set of arrows. They represent your intention or at least your wish to change the way we/you look at things, to turn around perspectives.

The Players are based on elements of a work process rather than physical appearance and abilities. Because these ways of working can each be beneficial to the different expertises in Amsterdam's theater sector, we can all choose whichever Player we want. For example: The Curious One can be chosen by someone who works at a fund or works as a volunteer, the Shif-tin' One can be both a director and a playwright. The key to choosing your figure is to imagine what this can mean in your respective field(s).

To keep the focus on the process instead of on their physical appearance, we're only seeing **the Players** from the chin down until a little under the upper parts of their chest, wearing their devices somewhere around their necks. This way, we don't suggest information about their abilities or appearance. Clues of their personalities and communities they can belong to, are given through subtle things such as the patterns of their clothing or a little piece of jewellery that can be spotted.

## Track 5

# OUR METHODOLOGY

Our new methodology is rooted in curiosity, research, imagining and shifting. These intentions overlap and not just because they are (or can be) a logical consequence of each other. The Fringe methodology consists of intentions that are in conversation with each other. What shifts will curiosity-driven research lead to? What shifts can make the existing expertise within our performance art sector more accessible? What do shifts in what we know as 'established' and marges/fringes mean for our curiosity? This mobility and repeatability means that we see the blossoming of the makers we work with as a learning path full of loops and roundabouts. By doing so we give our four intentions the opportunity to be considered a starting point, route, diversion and destination.

According to the Fringe methodology, each new performance begins with the question: "What do I want this work to contribute to the already existing conversations about this topic or these topics?" This question provides the following invitations:

- Curiosity: What do I know about the performances or other works of art that have been made about this subject or these subjects?
- Research: What question do I want to ask with my work? And/or: Which answers to existing questions do I want to contribute to?
- Imagining: How do I want to position myself in relation to this other work? Or, how can I position myself in relation to this other work? Who



can I be? Or, who do I want to be?

- Shift: What would I create if I saw myself and/or the communities whose daily realities are most deeply affected by my subject choice(s) as the primary audience group?



## Track 6

# ENJOYING THE SCENERY: THE DIFFERENT LANDMARKS OF YOUR CITY

### - Statues

The statues are linked to the questions connected to visibility, to being seen. These questions can be about audiences and being seen by programmers but also, and very much so, about the visibility of the topic(s) you'd like to discuss.

At the statues, you'll find two lines intersecting.

### - Lakes

These represent mirrors. They'll invite you to look beyond what you think people or institutions want to hear, beyond what they think is a must. Here, you'll be asked to show up with the kind of honest work you'd offer if you didn't have funds or festivals or any other artistic authority to answer to.

They can be found at spots where three or more lines intersect.

### - Big buildings symbolizing libraries and archives

Stations where you can catch a train of thought. And, while you wait to catch it... you wonder. You wonder in your head, on paper, on your headphones, in a park of choice... Because we strongly believe that there's absolutely no reason -well, besides capitalism- to always produce, produce, produce... we created a map that motivates you to also look up from it.

### - Street names

All four pillars of our methodology have at least one thing in common: they're fuelled by peaked interests, by a longing for more information. We hope that the names of the different streets and squares make you want to learn more about the foundations of theater in the Netherlands, specifically in Amsterdam.



## Track 7

### OUTRO

The results of our city's most recent subsidy rounds inform us that we must invest in longevity and a pushing-forward of not just the stories we tell but how we tell them. Who will we tell them with, what is it we truly want to say? An uprooting of the establishment and a rerouting of relevance lets us know that, as long as we're creative and together enough, our layers will always outweigh their limitations. We invite you to bring your will and intention to be curious, to research, to imagine and to shift. By doing so you'll embody Amsterdam Fringe Festival's ways of what Toni Morrison described as **claiming the margins as central**. Which isn't always a given and which often, if not continuously, requires work. And that's fine. You are here.

Thank goodness, you are here.



## Track 1

### THE MAP

We created this map as a visualization of our methodology. There are different ways to use it. With its beautiful design by LAMEIAE, we completely understand that it's something you also just want to look at. With its street names and illustrations, we hope it also gives you lots to think about even before using it as a board game.

#### **Start playin': The foundational places**

Come as you are and start where you'd like. You can start from one of the foundational places: Imagination, Curiosity, Research and Shifting. On the map, you'll see them on the edges of the map. You'll find Curiosity as the top of a blue circle on the bottom right. Of course you can turn the map around and put one of the other three foundational places closest to you. All four places are equally important and neither of them represent a north, south, east or west. But, as things go, we had to choose one direction from which it's easiest to read the street names and recognize the buildings and statues. Positioning the map in such a way that Curiosity is on the left and Shifting is on the right, works best.

Shifting looks like the left side of a red circle, just slightly above the middle of the map. Across from it, you'll find Curiosity, looking like the right side of a green circle. The foundational place Research looks like the bottom half of an orange circle. When the map is positioned in such a way that Imagination is at the bottom, you'll find Research at the top.



## Track 2

### THE NUMBERS

On the map there are white circles in which there are different numbers. The numbers aren't lined as 1-2-3. For example: you'll find number 21 as the connection between 61 and 46. We chose this as a way to reflect the many questions that aren't part of this board game but can absolutely be part of your work process.

Each number comes with its own question. Each answer to these questions connects you to the next number. This results in some routes being longer than others. As an example of how to use the map as a board game, we join you on nine of its routes.

Each question is about you and your work. What “work” means, depends on the work process you’d like to focus on. If you’re working in the marketing department, “work” can mean a promotional text. For those working for a fund or as a policy officer, “work” can be a report, publication, etc.. If you’re a theatre maker, your “work” is the play. And, so on. Because ours is a methodology of reconsiderations, some questions are asked more than once.

The full list of questions, answers and directions on where to move can be found here



### Track 3

## DIRECTIONS ON WHERE/HOW TO MOVE

When playing our board game, you move forward. With this we mean: Forward when you have your back to one of the foundational places. Even if you want to start from the middle of the map, please choose one of the foundational places to serve as a place to have your back turned to.

Free as we hope to be, there is one rule: you can’t move backwards on the same street. Which isn’t to say that you can’t end up at the same number/question again. Just not immediately. If you return, we want you to come back to the question with some fresh ideas. This means there are three directions:

- If the answer to the question is “I’m not sure”, you go straight ahead.
- If the answer to the question is “Yes”, you go left.
- If the answer to the question is “No”, you move to the right.

### Exceptions

If there are two or three streets in the same direction, please choose the street with the name or word you know least about. For example, number 21 has three streets going in the same direction: Costume gracht, Gita Hacham street and Light plot lane. If you know Gita Hacham but you’ve never thought about a light plot, that’s the street for you.

### Intentions and instincts

The board game is centered around four foundational places: Curiosity, Research, Shifting and Imagination. Each of them is surrounded by numbers that are all linked to a question. Remember how you picked one as a navigating tool? Now, please pick one of the numbers in a direction that

reflects your vibe. If you're unsure about where your work is going, go straight ahead. If you feel sure-sure about what you're about to work on, go left. If you don't know what you'd like to do but you're certain about what you don't want to do, pick a number on your right.



#### Track 4

## NUMBERS AND QUESTIONS

39. Is it important to you to offer something completely new?
37. Thinking of the change your work can make... Did you already choose your favorite form of bravery? For example: In your press release or policy report, you can replace some words with terms that some might consider 'too political'. Or, for your costume design you can choose or suggest a look that you yourself are still not sure of... just to take a chance. Perhaps you chose something else that is considered risky but you did it anyway.
35. Do you feel great, perhaps even complete freedom in the language -visual, written, choreographed, sonic, etc.- you're using in this work?
42. Do you want your work to also be new for people who are very familiar or perhaps even experts on the topic?
- 55: Can you name three plays by current and/or former Amsterdam Fringers that also discuss(ed) the main theme or one of the main themes in your work?
- 53 blue: Do you have to transform yourself to do this work?
- 53 red: Do you have to transform the work to do you? To remain true to yourself?



#### Track 5

48. Do you think it's important to point out identities? For example: A beautiful story about Queer folks finding softness in the city and falling in love with each other... would you describe that as a Queer love story or a love story?
51. Do you consider identity to be a storyline?
44. Do you have the expertise to know what your craftpersonship is worth financially?
19. Thinking of the change your work can make... Did you already choose your favorite form of bravery? For example: In your press release or policy report, you can replace some words with terms that some might consider 'too political'. Or, for your costume design you can choose or suggest a

look that you yourself are still not sure of... just to take a chance. Perhaps you chose something else that is considered risky but you did it anyway.

46. With this work, who are you in conversation with?

66. Is it important to you to use a language -visual, written, choreographed, etc.- that's understandable to most/"all"?

63. Do you feel great, perhaps even complete freedom in the language -visual, written, choreographed, sonic, etc.- you're using in this work?

74. When doing research, do you mainly focus on your own discipline or genre? For example: As a costume designer, do you mainly look at other designers or is the work of architects and painters equally or perhaps more important to you? If you're writing, do you primarily check out the work of other writers or do you focus more on music and imagery?



## Track 6

68. In your work, is there space to show your personal knowledge and/or expertise?

61. Instead of a question, this is an invitation to read an interview of choice with Felix de Rooy. After that, take seven deep breaths before continue reading ...

If what you remember most about the interview is one of his questions, please choose the street that goes straight forward. If what you remember most is one of his answers, please choose the street that goes left.

21. Is there a form, other than the one you're working with the most, you would consider experimenting with?

58. Instead of a question, this is an invitation to check out one of these articles about performance artist Fabiola or Felix de Rooy. After that, please continue on the middle one of the three streets.

Performance artist Fabiola:

- Levend kunstwerk Fabiola, on Youtube (in Dutch) or

- Fabiola Levend Kunstwerk – Nu Dood, on Youtube (on Dutch).

Felix de Rooy:

- Felix de Rooy: Art in the face of empire, on Youtube (in English) or

- Felix de Rooy, filmmaker on the website of Stedelijk Studies (in English).

56. Do you consider yourself (and people like you) to be the main audience of your work?

32. Is there a community, other than the ones you're part of, you would consider shaping your story with?

31. Do you consider lived experiences to be an expertise?



29. Do you consider identity to be a storyline?  
27. Do you consider visibility to be a reflection of urgency?  
23. Does your language -visual, written, choreographed, sonic, etc.- reflect the most recent conversations about the main themes in your work?



### Track 7

78. In/with your work, would you rather ask questions than propose answers?  
26. Do quiet, silence and stillness play an important part in your work?  
76. Do you feel great, perhaps even complete freedom in the language -visual, written, choreographed, sonic, etc.- you're using in this work?  
70. Can you name three plays by current and/or former Amsterdam Fringers that also discussed the main theme or one of the main themes in your work?
81. No question, just a hydration break. Be sure to drink some tea, juice, coffee or water before you continue. If you yourself just had a drink, there's probably a plant you can water. After that, please continue on the street with the color that best matches the last thing that caught your attention.  
83. Is it important to you to create work for an intergenerational audience?



AFM - The Map - Example 1



AFM - The Map - Example 2



AFM - The Map - Example 3