

# GRU...P

(Working title)

An interactive performance between audiences and performers

## PROFONDO ROSSO

### Project

GRU...P (Working title)

### Team

Cecilia Rosso - director/performer

Jakob Lohmann - performer

Raphaël Albanese - performer

Sofia Chionidou - writing support

Nick Verginis - writing support



# G r u . . . P

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Gru..p (working title) is a participatory performance by Profondo Rosso that transforms public spaces through movement and interaction. With a gantry crane at its centre, the piece is brought to life by the three performers and their combined movement research, stemming from different disciplines: Cecilia Rosso (straps), Jakob Lohmann (equilibrium) and Raphaël Albanese (breakdance). Together with the audience, they explore themes of trust, agency and transformation. By repurposing the crane and inviting its physical exploration, Gru...p builds an ephemeral community where people from different backgrounds come together, turning individual experiences into a collective movement.



# P R E S E N T A T I O N O F T H E C O M P A N Y

**PROFONDO ROSSO** is an international and interdisciplinary company founded by Cecilia Rosso.

Profondo Rosso combines the fields of performance, visual arts and plastic arts, to create dramaturgies around human themes. The work of the company focuses on performances and installations that involve the public to create a deeper connection with the performer and with themselves.

## The collective is composed of:



**Cecilia Rosso (1996)** is an Italian interdisciplinary artist based in The Netherlands. Her work is personal and addresses themes like self-perception, self-reflection and identity, as individuals as well as in connection to society. These themes and personal expressions are translated through combining her movement language and circus background, with structures that reflect light, absorb and manipulate lights. With her personal and ambitious approach, Cecilia aims to be active in the international artfield, connecting different worlds and individuals.

**Jakob Lohmann (1995)** is an artist from Germany. Jakob's stage work is concerned with the actor/spectator relationship in various forms and aspects, while drawing parallels to the structures in our society. This political aspect carries through into his work off stage, taking shape in public interventionist activities.

"How can we challenge the established expectations and performance formats within art to create work that goes beyond consumption and forces the spectator to take action as part of the development of the performance?"

Jakob is working as dramaturg, rigger and technician in Profondo Rosso and is also involved as performer in Gru...P.



**Raphaël Albanese (1997)** is a multidisciplinary artist based in Liège, Belgium. He is experimenting with photography, dance (breakdance), videography, 3D designing, painting, drawing, sound design, mapping and art installations.

In Profondo Rosso we like to work with the multiplicity of his skills and interests. For Gru...P he will be involved as performer.



# C O N C E P T

## I N T E N T I O N

With the new creation, Profondo Rosso is researching how a movement can be created through a participatory work actively involving audience members.

The aim is to create a community based on interpersonal connection by inviting the audience to co-create the work through physical interaction. The invitation in this case is not done in a predetermined way, but through opening up the possibility for the audience members to take agency and responsibility for their actions towards the co-creation. In that way, the crane, the performers and the audience members will act on building a feeling of collective consciousness and reclaiming public space.





# CONCEPT

## THE CRANE

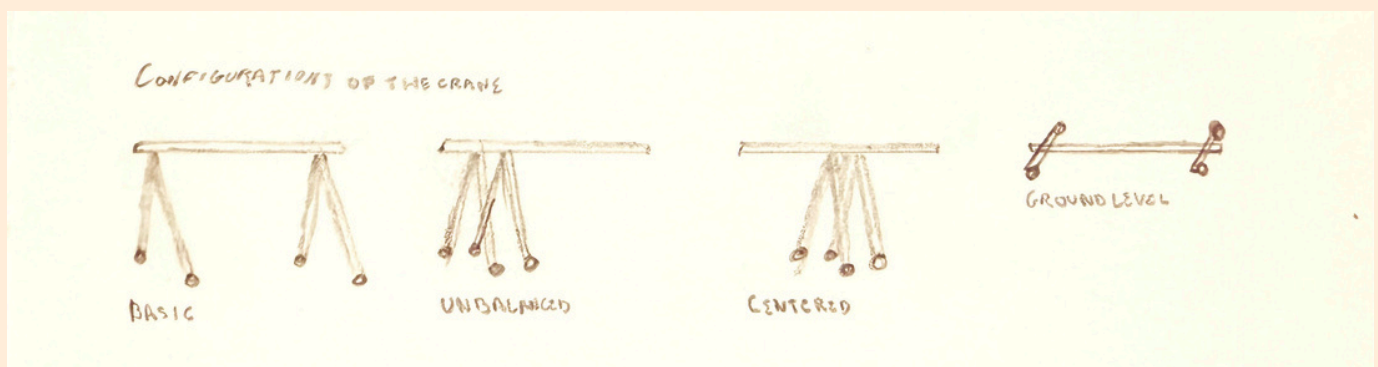
**A physical connection between audience and performers.**

The piece is an interactive work, where the audience is invited to connect with other audience members and the performers through a physical object, a gantry crane. A gantry crane is commonly used in construction sites to lift and move construction materials around. In the case of the performance, the crane is used, also symbolically, as a means to build a sense of community and inspire physical interaction.

Through the creation process the performers research the transformative qualities of the gantry crane and their opportunities for physical experimentation, interaction and collaboration. By introducing this unconventional object to the audience, they trigger their explorative interest in order to develop methods of bodily non-verbal communication.

As an example of how transformation invites physical participation, in a proposed first scene of the work, the building up of the crane is done in collaboration with the audience. This moment is the starting point for the performers to take up the facilitator role. By allowing the audience to actively take decisions and responsibility in the piece, they blur the established hierarchy between performers as leaders and audience as passive followers. So, as the crane gets built, also the codes of this group's communication are put into place and the fundamentals of their social contract are established.

Throughout the piece, the facilitators together with the audience, physically discover the object constructed in the public space. After the building process, different configurations of the crane as well as ways of moving with it get presented to the audience. Some of the situations that are explored are: transporting the crane through space, familiarising with circus techniques such as straps and equilibrium, breakdance cyphers and balances with the crane. And it is through the use of those physical explorations that community values such as the concept of interdependence, trust and mutual support are introduced.



# AUDIENCE & PERFORMERS

## The performance as a tool to develop mutual awareness and communication

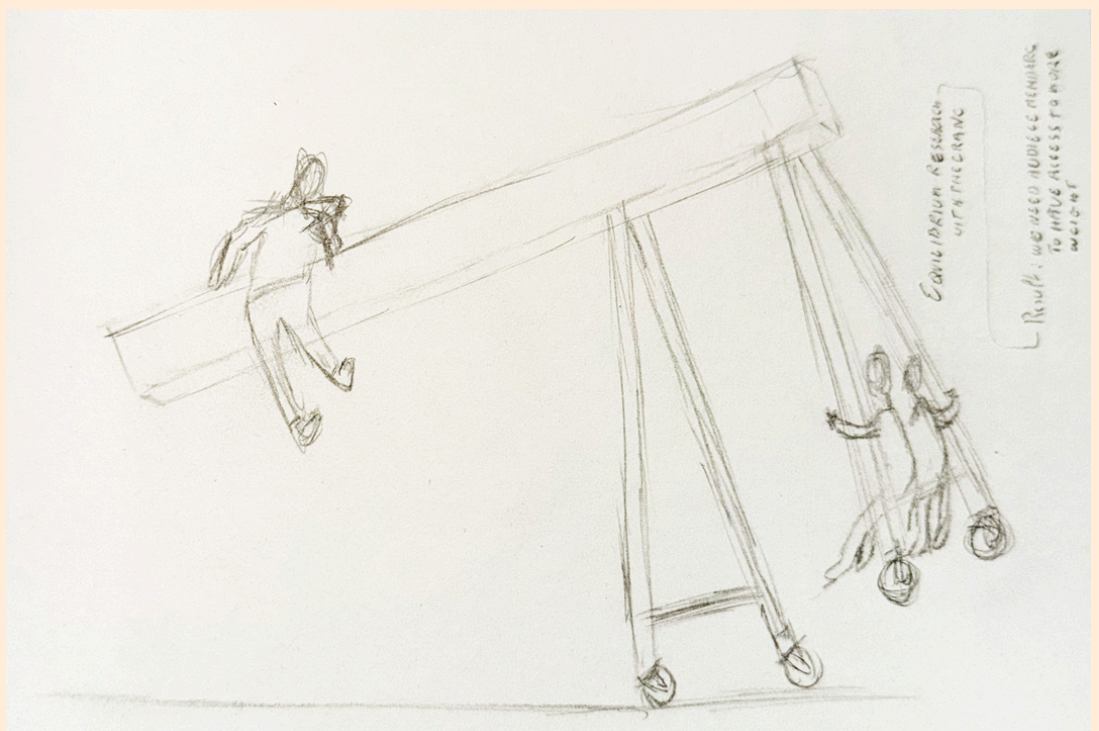
At the base of the work lies the research question: How can we create a community sense? This entails developing mutual support and interdependence among audience and performers, to eventually lead to an emancipated audience with its own agency. Only then is an ephemeral community created, one that has the possibility to move from individual to collective consciousness.

In order to do that, the facilitators establish a set of codes that aims to invite the audience to share responsibility, both in ensuring the physical safety and successful experimentations of the performers and other audience members, as well as in co-creating the outcome of the performance. They also empower them into building trust towards each other and themselves, again in a physical and an emotional sense simultaneously, creating an environment where they are all encouraged to take the risk of expressing themselves. The artists encourage this empowerment and agency by creating an “incomplete” work, one that needs the audience’s participation to become complete (for example, see image #). With the vulnerability of the performers as a starting point, an environment of open communication and awareness, both sensorial and social, is established, one that is necessary for building a safe space.

The creation of a community, with values such as trust, responsibility and agency, is here the end goal of a transition this work proposes. Functioning as a liminal space, the performance suggests a passing from being in public space as an individual to being in it as part of a collective consciousness.

Image #

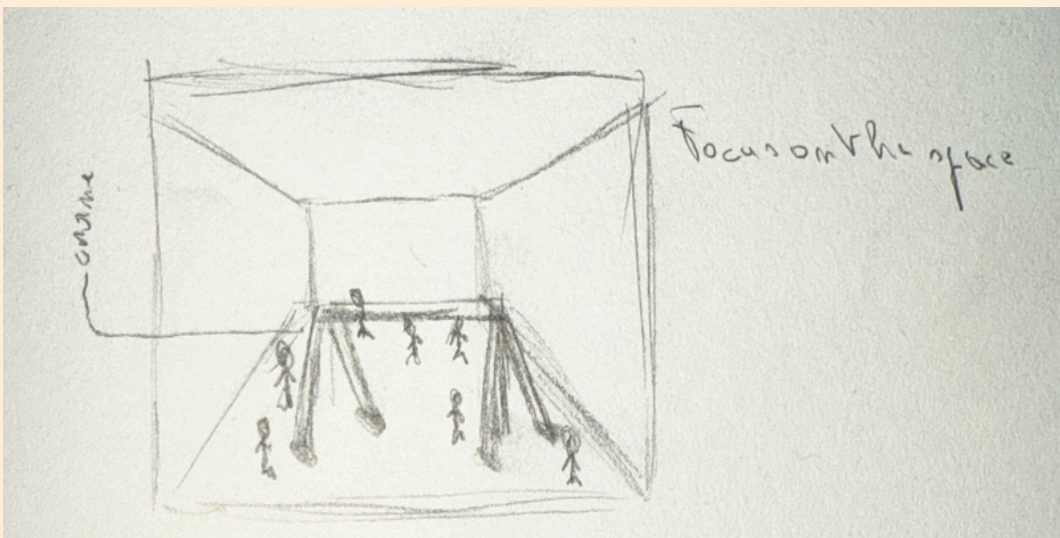
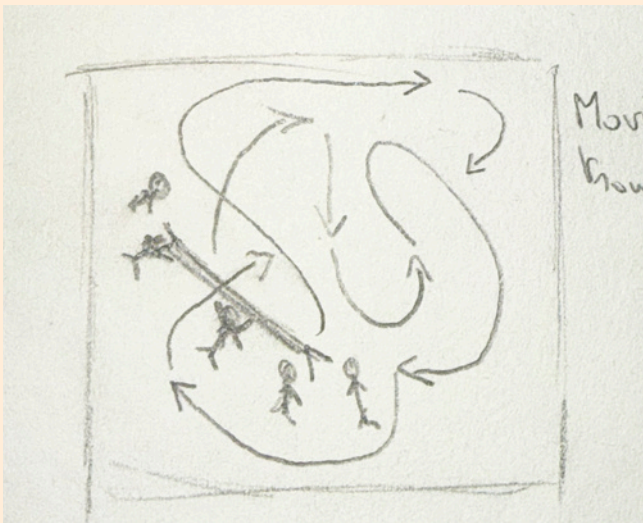
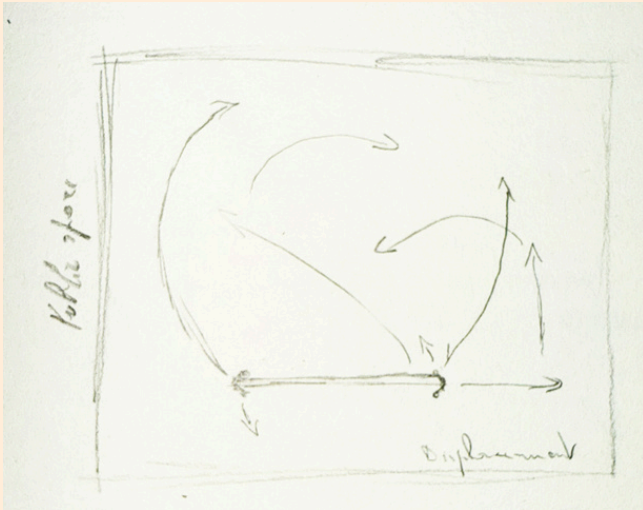
We envision the possibility to create a balance situation with the support of audiences. In the drawing you can see the three performers trying to balance in the L configuration, due to the weight of the crane this is not possible, so audience help is needed.



## SPACE

### The performance as a tool to reclaim public space

Recognizing that public space is always a contested space of conflicting interests, the performance is interested in reappropriating it. Bringing the performance to public spaces such as squares, neighborhoods or universities reflects Profondo Rosso's interest in redefining them as communal and collaborative areas. To do so, they use this work as a tool which creates an ephemeral social contract, uniting the audience and the performers into one community inside the, otherwise dispersed and antagonistic, public space.. Additionally, connecting with the tradition of circus as an itinerant artform going to the audience, this performance is set in public space as a way to become accessible to a wider audience.





# CALENDAR

The development of the concept for this new creation started in 2023 with the planned year of its premiere being 2027.

## Experimentation stage (2023/2024):

**April 2023 Blank space CIRKLABO (BE):** week-long residency of the performers to study the gantry crane. During this experimentation the different configurations of the crane were discovered, as well as different ways to combine circus (equilibrium & straps) and breakdance elements with the crane, thus reinventing it.

**December 2024 Maker for a week TENT (NL):** week-long residency of the performers, researching ways to invite audience participation in the context of a performance with the crane.

**December 2024 Biblioteque residency Latitude50 (BE):** week-long concept writing residency of Cecilia Rosso, Raphaël Albanese, Nick Verginis and Sofia Chionidou, with the aim of concept development and with a focus on producing the material (dossier, calendar, budget) needed to start a fundraising campaign in 2025.

## Fundraising (2025/2026):

The company has applied and will apply for the following funding and residency support:

- 3-week studio residency in PPCM (FR) **applied/not confirmed**
- Geemente Rotterdam fundings (NL) **to apply**
- De Grote Post (BE) **to apply**
- MiraMiro (BE) **in conversation/not confirmed**
- Dommelhof (BE) **in conversation/not confirmed**
- NORMA Plus (NL) **to apply**
- Cultuurfonds (NL) **to apply**
- Culture Moves Europe (EU) **to apply**
- Insitu (EU) **to apply**
- Ay-roop (FR) **to apply**
- Inspiral (HU) **to apply**
- CIRKLABO **to apply**

Additional information on the fundings and their use can be found on the budget of the creation.



## **Creation (2026/2027):**

This phase will be divided in the stages presented below, with the following focuses: crane development, familiarisation between crane and performers, workshops with audience groups and tryout performances in public spaces, that will eventually lead to the piece's premiere and touring phase.

### **Crane development stage:**

The development of the crane is planned for the year 2025, starting from the research by the performers of its necessary elements, additions or modifications and overall design requirements. It will then proceed to the connection with a possible engineer and constructor and conclude in the actual production/modification of the crane, before the beginning of 2026.

### **Familiarisation between crane and performers:**

This stage is envisioned as 3 weeks of collaborative work of all three performers. During this time, they will familiarise themselves with the crane and physically work on the conceived structure to see how it can be put to practice, in consultation with a dramaturg. Finally, participatory workshops will be drafted for the next phase of the creation, as well as a risk assessment document discussing crane and audience participation.

## **Workshops with audience members:**

This stage will be divided in two different explorations: studio workshops that will focus on understanding the codes needed to safely involve the audience and workshops in public spaces that will look into the difference they make in the established modes of participation. In this entire phase the audience will be thoroughly informed about the piece and will be invited to join in the thinking and creative process of developing participation tools

The first part of the exploration is envisioned as 3 weeks of studio work, likely in connection with three different institutions that can support Profondo Rosso to connect with local audiences. Additionally, the input of a facilitation expert will be sought to support this research.

The second part of this exploration is envisioned as 7 days of guided workshops in different public spaces where the information gathered in the previous workshops can be applied. The focus of this will be in understanding how the setting of the public space can impact the work in terms of emotional safety.

## **Staging phase - work-in-progress showings:**

A minimum of 5 work-in-progress showings are envisioned for this phase, to put in practice the outcomes of the above mentioned research and test the structure of the piece in consultation with a dramaturg. Here it is important that these showings take place in different contexts (organisations, locations, etc.) and that the audience gives feedback on the complete performance, without having been involved in the creative process beforehand.

After this phase, the work will be finalised and will be able to premiere in 2027 and possibly tour in 2027/2028.



# STRUCTURE OF THE PIECE

The structure of the piece is proposed following what was discovered physically in the first weeks of experimentation in April 2023 (CIRKLABO) between performers, audience and crane. It will also be more clearly defined following the coming stages of creation, especially regarding the design of the different configurations of the crane and the workshop situations with real audience.

## **The structure has been practically imagined as such:**

First, in a series of movements, Cecilia, Jakob, and Raphael, are appearing “on stage”, bringing pieces of the crane, such as beams, screws, and wheels. A simple question such as “Can you hold for a sec?” is inviting the audience to feel that the crane cannot be built without them and starts planting the seeds of communal feelings towards a common goal. Small exercises of play and trust can help discover the crane, the space, and the relations between all of the elements.

After building up the crane, the performers are inviting the audience to explore the crane physically, through demonstrating the different setups and configurations of the crane, as well as familiarizing them with different circus techniques and movement qualities.

The different configurations of the crane as shown in images are:

### **Basic - Portique**



### **Unbalanced - L configuration**



### **Ground level - skateboard/bench**

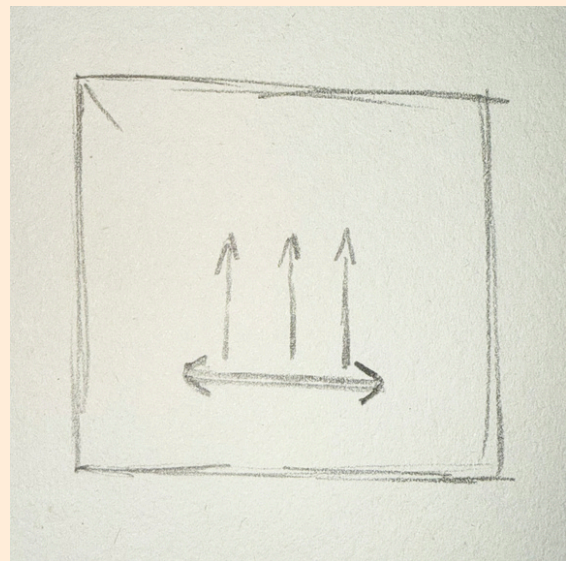


### **Centered - T configuration**



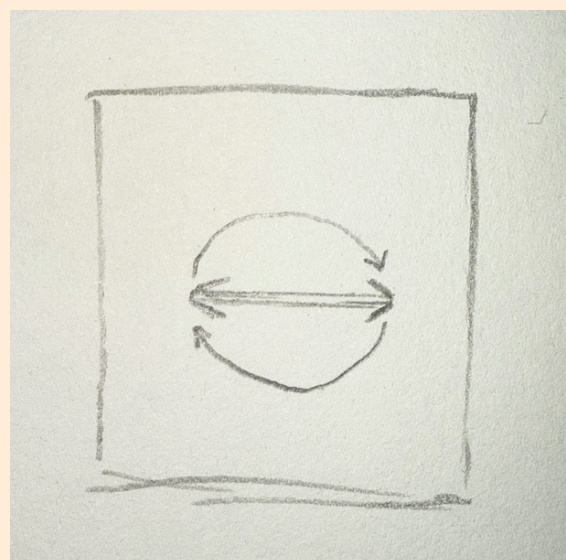
# STRUCTURE OF THE PIECE

The movements start from simple counterweight and balance techniques and exercises, used to achieve equilibrium by the performer Jakob Lohmann. Audience members and facilitators can balance, sit, or stand on the legs and sides of the crane, or support when others are moving the crane into space (forward, round, diagonal → check photo and video material\*).



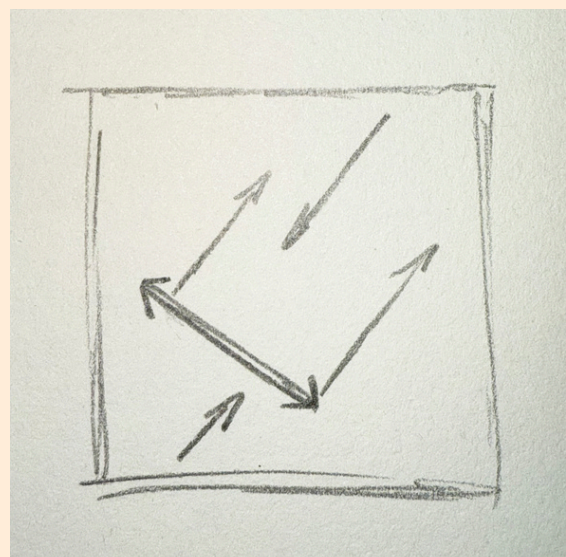
FORWARD MOVEMENT .

Then, the straps are introduced in relation to breakdance. The performer Raphael Albanese starts playing with the straps and creates the idea of using straps as a floor. Coming from the tradition of breakdance cyphers as an open communication space, the next scene involves 1 body in space (Raphael Albanese) and the audience around. In this case, the dialogue between them is achieved by sounds coming from the crane, body percussion, whistling, or any kind of sound creation, echoing a sense of community. This could eventually lead to a creation of a musical piece on a physical level.



CIRCULAR MOVEMENT .

Finally, the audience can also experience how they can use the straps at the center of the crane. The two straps can be used either together or separately, used as a swing or as a rope, a pulley, and many different mechanisms that include a “flying” feeling of play shown by the performer Cecilia Rosso.



DIAGONAL MOVEMENT .