

A MAJOR DRAIN?

Dear Mrs. alderman, dear Nabilla,

Erasing the city's project subsidies for arts and culture for the next three years is a disastrous gesture. The Antwerp arts sector is still shaken by the pandemic effects and is still vulnerable. This decision threatens to hit the art scene once again in its core.

Project funds, as modest as they may be, are the breeding ground for the artists of tomorrow. They feed the breeding ponds in which young artists and creators develop and flourish. Take away these resources and the breeding ponds run dry. The water level in the breeding soil is then eventually so low that the young trees and plants wither away. The young artists and their biotope are stifled in their growth.

What remains anno 2026 is an atrophied urban cultural landscape. The Antwerp cultural ecosystem will be permanently damaged. For the image of a city that is internationally recognized as a hub of art, creativity and innovation, this is a sledgehammer blow from which it is difficult to recover.

As representatives of higher arts education in Antwerp, we hope that you and the other city policymakers are not blind to the disastrous effects of this decision. In view of the emerging talent manifesting itself at our art institutions, we would like to consult and help find solutions to this crisis.

This major drain cannot and should not happen. Targeted irrigation is essential. The artists of tomorrow, their audiences and the image of Antwerp will benefit of this.

Yours sincerely,

Bart Eeckhout, Chairman Antwerp Research Institute for the Arts
Ann Laenen, Director Sint Lucas Antwerp
Stefaan De Ruyck, Head of the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp
Johan Pas, Head of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp