

Rita Hoofwijk, SoAP Maastricht
Finisterre

A DIZZYING INVERSION OF OUR EVERYDAY PERSPECTIVE

Sander Janssens

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Seen on 7 July 2019, Over het IJ Festival, Amsterdam

The voice through my headphones tells me ‘We’ll meet in eight minutes.’. Yards away, at the edge of the boatyard, stands the owner of that voice. Eight minutes, that’s exactly how long it takes the light to reach earth from the sun. The light in which we’re soon to meet is already on its way.

That light is crucial because it has a decisive impact on the scenography of this performance. Which, after all, consists of roughly eighty percent air. If the sun is too high in the sky it’ll blind you, too low and the experience evaporates. That’s why you visit *Finisterre* by Rita Hoofwijk during the handful of hours before sundown, roughly between eight and ten. And it’s a dizzying experience that, quite literally, turns your perspective of the world on its head.

Last year I wrote something very similar about Johannes Bellinckx’s walking performance *Reverse*, which was also to be experienced at venues including the Over het IJ Festival. It is no coincidence that, like Rita Hoofwijk, Bellinckx belongs to the production platform SoAP Maastricht. Where Bellinckx turned our perspective inside out by letting us walk a route backwards, Hoofwijk turns our world upside down.

In this individual experience you lie on your back on the edge of the IJkade, at a slight angle so your head is a little lower than your feet and look out over the water and the city that way. You feel pretty dizzy at first: where the horizon normally curves down slightly at the edges of your field of vision, now it’s suddenly the other way around. The city skyline is little more than a strip between an expanse of sky and water. Someone - Hoofwijk herself in my case - leads you deeper into what you see, then leaves you on your own. She also asks you to surrender to it - literally - to trust in gravity again. This means you have to let go, which makes this performance more than a no-strings experience.

In less than half an hour this experience totally changes how you see your surroundings - it truly feels as if you’ve never seen that stretch of water and that city before, and Amsterdam’s soporific skyline is instantly sublime. Also, the structure of the performance is extremely well thought through: you start off in a closed sea container to get a chance to shake off the hubbub of the heart of the festival, hear a wonderfully poetic introduction on your headphones, and have time to reflect on the experience afterwards.

Finisterre assails you with the beauty of everyday life and forces you to trust in something that initially inspires fear.