



## **REBOOT THE ROOTS 2016**

### **Report on Downstate Festival (Zurich, Switzerland)**

Thanks to the funding supplied by RtR, George Wielgus and Sierra Weppa were able to attend the Downstate Festival in Zurich for 4 days.

During this time, George was able to sell copies of his book, and of a pair of zines made specially for the festival, as well as performing at the opening night.

Sierra Weppa presented her artworks, sold copies of her zine, and was a featured artist at the Tattoo Wagen.

Both facilitators made numerous contacts with persons involved in the arts and socially conscious practice from across Europe, and received invitations to attend further festivals and visit people to discuss future collaborations.

As a model of supporting artists development, this kind of activity exactly fits the stated purposes of RtR. In fact, without the financial support of RtR, the artists would have been unable to attend and missed a fantastic opportunity for development.

One note is that there were some errors with the budgeting for transport: the organisers misinformed the artists about getting from Basel to Zurich, forcing them to take the train, and also the artists forgot to budget for transport to and from London to the airports.

As the artists are working on extremely tight budgets, they have submitted a request for reimbursement of these expenses for the consideration of the trustees.

Please find attached the blog posts and photos from the event.

## Blog posts

From George F.

27/01/16

“We lost in court the week before, and had spent a week running around trying to find a new place to live, with no success. Exhausted but determined, we spent the last day traipsing across London – attending an eviction resistance in the morning which drove the bailiffs off, before returning to Borough to collect our belongings, then delivering them to East Ham by bike to a safe storage space, before rushing back to collect the dog and take it to our friends' place in Bow. In East Ham, the laptop we were going to use to print our flight tickets exploded, reducing us to panicky, stressed tears as we tried to find a 24-hour print shop. After delivering the dog, we marched to Liverpool Street, arriving just on time at 3am. There were two buses, and people in two-different coloured hi-viz vests were chatting in a relaxed fashion outside one, so I assumed this was for both coach companies. They made a joke about the cheaper one being crap, and as we scanned through our phone for the pdf of the ticket, our bus pulled away ... Refusing to be cowed, we spent another £8 on tickets and made it to the airport ... Without the extra funding from RtR we would never have been able to make it!”

01/02/16

“The four books I brought I sold or swapped with other artists for their work, the 20 zines reduced to 3, and a pot full of donations and contacts from across Europe ... In addition, we saw some amazing performers, and confused a room full of people with my own particular brand of rapid-fire poetry. Apparently, spoken word is not so big in Switzerland. :-). Highlights included seeing an old friend from squatting in a furniture store five years ago, meeting a member of the Mutoid Waste Company, and seeing a pair perform a song about orgasms whilst dressed as a penis and a vagina. We also made contacts with artists from Marseille, Lausanne and Berlin and discussed the possibility of future collaborations in those locations and in London, as well as the potential to travel to Canada to work with indigenous communities as a solidarity project.

Thanks to everyone at Downstate Festival, and to RtR for all the support.”

From Sierra Wepla

“I have been working every single day for a couple of weeks until late night in order to bring enough art pieces, zines, posters and other diy stuff to the festival. I wasn't exactly sure what to expect, nor how will things go as it was organised for the first time. In my opinion it could have been a total fiasco or a super nice festival. But was worth it to risk.

RtR funding helped me to prepare for the fest – I had enough money to buy paper, printer toners and not to worry about not having enough copies for sale/swaps, in case the festival was going to go very well. In the end, because of the funding I was able to carry about 80 A3 posters, 10 A1 posters, about 50 copies of self-published zine, and help to print out about 30 copies of George's zines.”

During and after the festival

“Festival went, I would say, incredibly well. I came back with empty bag. All the prints, stickers and copies went. Besides that, I met incredible artists and performers from across the Europe. It came out to be super international - people came from Greece, Germany, Netherlands and all around. A fellow tattoo artist who I met in the fest invited me to come to Tattoo Circus - a benefit for prisoners in Thessaloniki. Flights paid - accommodation sorted. Alongside exhibiting and selling, I made around 10 tattoos in the wagon which Festival organiser prepared for me. This will

allow me to pay for my studio and start to work on new series of paintings. Thanks RtR!”

**Budget EXTRAS:**

Due to misinformation from organiser, we didn't have a lift from Basel to Zurich, and the train was very expensive. Also, I keep forgetting to budget for the transport to and from the airport. I hope that RtR will be able to reimburse these costs, and fund for the trip to the airport for Budapest.

**Downstate – request for additional expenses to be covered**

<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Train Basel/Zurich</b>	<b>Travel (bus/coach to airport)</b>	<b>Total Requested</b>
George Wielgus	£25	£18	£43
Sierra Weppla	£25	£18	£43

**Budapest airport funding**

<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Bus To Airport + Return</b>	<b>Total Requested</b>
George Wielgus	£20	£20

**TOTAL REQUESTED****£106**