



PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY SHEETS

Summary

The Cassandra Project is an ambitious project empowering young storytellers (ages 18–30) to become socially engaged performers ready to electrify international stages. Spanning Poland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Norway, the project blends creativity and social engagement through the art of storytelling.

From April to October 2025, participants worked with local mentors, drawing on community research to craft compelling performances. These culminated in international debuts at *De Vlugt* in Amsterdam, hosted by The Storytelling Centre, from the 3rd to the 5th of November 2025. Each 20-minute performance was presented in curated groups of three, offering audiences a vibrant and diverse programme.

This document provides activity sheets detailing information about the creation and delivery of the 15 original performances, including, among other things, script excerpts, galleries, artist statement interviews and journal pages.



Cassandra Performers, Mentors and Organisers' team after the final performance in Amsterdam on the 5th of November 2025.

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1. Willemijn Hordijk

Performance: But Daddy I Love Her

Date: Sunday, 3 November 2025

Time: 16.00hr

Performance Blurb: *Like many young women, Willemijn grew up believing she would find a handsome prince. She thought she had found him, so she gave him her time, love, and especially her voice. And in the end, she died. But unlike other princesses, she picked up the pen to write the ending of her own fairy tale...*

Willemijn tells a story of growing up as a young woman, fighting dragons and life after a toxic relationship.

Storyteller Biography: Willemijn Hordijk grew up in a small, boring village in the Netherlands. Searching for adventure, she moved to the big city of Utrecht to study Theatre and Education and now works as an actress and drama teacher. She's a fairytale detective, vintage lover, and wine enthusiast who loves doing karaoke. She specialises in heartbreak songs while holding a glass of chardonnay in an old flower dress. Her favourite nickname is Tante (Dutch for auntie), and she always brings lipstick. You never know when you have to kiss a frog....



Artist Statement Sheet

Can you describe your performance in 5 words?

Growing up, self-love, humour

Tell us more about the performance you made, the tone, structure, and narrative.

The fairy tale of "The Little Mermaid" was my starting point. I wrote my version of it first. After that, I wrote my own story of finding love and a storyline of the relationship I wanted to talk about.

What key moments or elements do you think will resonate most with your audience? How did you achieve this?

I think of the little jokes that I made. Finding laughter in darkness is always nice. Talking about my childhood and believing in fairy tales felt like it resonated greatly with the audience because people could see themselves in it. Constantly making connections back to the mermaid worked really well. And of course that I started to sing when I just told them I lost my voice and I wasn't allowed to sing in the car. That brought laughter, joy and love in the room.

How did you integrate your research and the community voices into your performance?

From all the stories I wrote out of my own experience, I picked the ones that the people I talked to also went through so they felt recognition. Some were too personal so I had to skip them.

What challenges have you faced in creating your performance?

There were moments I cried because it felt like I gave a voice to my ex-boyfriend and to what he did. That was really hard. I cried during the writing of some of the moments because it brought back terrible memories of him and our time together.

What impact do you want to create, and/or what conversations do you hope to inspire?

I hope people feel seen and heard and know they're not alone. I hope I can inspire people to not feel shame about what happened to them.

Any tips for future Cassandras?

More workshops in traditional storytelling!!! Who do you want to work with? Amateurs or people who already have some experience?

But Daddy I Love Her - Script Excerpt

(Spotlight on the performer. She stands alone, a mixture of vulnerability and suppressed strength. A beat of silence before she begins.)

"Can you maybe tell me I'm pretty? You don't have to say it every day, but maybe once a week?"
I asked him.

"You know that you're pretty. I don't have to say that to you."

"Can you maybe say that you're proud of me? You don't have to say it every week, but maybe once a month?"
I asked him.

"You know I'm proud of you. I don't have to say that to you."

"Can you maybe say that you love me? You don't have to say it every month, but maybe once a year?"
I asked him.

"You know I love you. I don't have to say that to you. Don't ever ask me these stupid questions again and don't be so pathetic."

(A pause. She looks down, her voice quieter now, resigned.)

So I stopped asking. Actually, I just stopped talking at all. I just... smiled.

(She takes a step forward, her voice tinged with bitterness.)

I stopped wearing dresses because he liked me better in jeans. I hate jeans. I wore jeans.
I did everything just to fit into his expectations. I followed him around like a little puppy—but this time, not through a garden.

(Her tone grows heavier, the weight of her words pressing down.)

The only friends we saw were his friends. I never saw my friends again. I wanted nothing more than to be one of them. Like the mermaid wanted to be a human instead of a beautiful sea creature.

(She pauses, a sharp inhale.)

Maybe the most terrible thing was that I wasn't allowed to play my music in my car—even when I was driving.
And maybe the worst thing was that I wasn't allowed to sing...

(She half-laughs, bitterly, shaking her head.)

Performance: The Story That Disappeared

2. Meja Ohlsson Rodriguez

Date: Sunday, 3 November 2025

Time: 16.00hr

Performance Blurp: *Many years ago, under the stars, an epic tale was told and lost. How many stories have been told and lost since then? During this performance, storyteller Meja O. Rodriguez explores stories from her family's past, including the journey from one country to another.*

How many memories disappeared along the way, and how much of the culture gets lost from one generation to another.

Storyteller Biography: My name is **Meja Ohlsson Rodriguez**. I am a young storyteller born and raised in Ljungby, the land of legends in Sweden. Because of this, I have been blessed to have stories around me from a very young age. But it wasn't until I was 15 that I realised that this was a profession I could have.

Even though I am not a full-time storyteller yet, I have been given the opportunity to tell stories for a lot of different audiences and on different occasions. Everything from a guided tour in the Museum of Legends or in the woods by the fire during the storytelling festival in Ljungby. I have competed in the Swedish storytelling championship. And the opportunities never cease to come. And now I am creating a performance about me for the first time ever. The stories from my family's journey to Sweden and the stories and memories we lost on the way.



Artist Statement

Can you describe your performance in 5 words?

Culture, childhood, family, hope, questions

Tell us more about the performance you made, the tone, structure, and narrative. What key moments or elements do you think will resonate most with your audience?

That it is hard to relate to something that is so out of our own private life. And that it is okay to not fully understand it. As long as we ask questions, to get more understanding to tell this information to others. This is how important stories and events live on, because every story is important so that history doesn't repeat itself.

How did you achieve this?

To take my time in these moments. to try and put more of an emphasis on those words. Ask questions, listen to the answers and stories.

How did you integrate your research and the community voices into your performance?

Much of the research was about memories, what my grandparents had been through and how much of their story we of the younger generation was told. So the story off/from my grandmother has many details from the interview and is actually a mashup of stories from different relatives, not only my grandmother but also my aunt, grandfather, great grandmother and her brother, and a great uncle.

What challenges have you faced in creating your performance?

The research was quite hard. I had some challenges in talking about a very sore subject and heavy memories. But also taking so many voices and making them into one and taking that voice and letting it say as much as possible without being too personal and make it fit within the time frame. This was a new type of storytelling that I'm not too familiar with, and that in combination with being almost pushed into working in a way I was not used to or comfortable with was really a struggle for me. So finding the joy and myself as a storyteller again right before the show was also hard.

What impact do you want to create, and/or what conversations do you hope to inspire?

The very importance of stories and storytelling and the bonds and magical places they create.

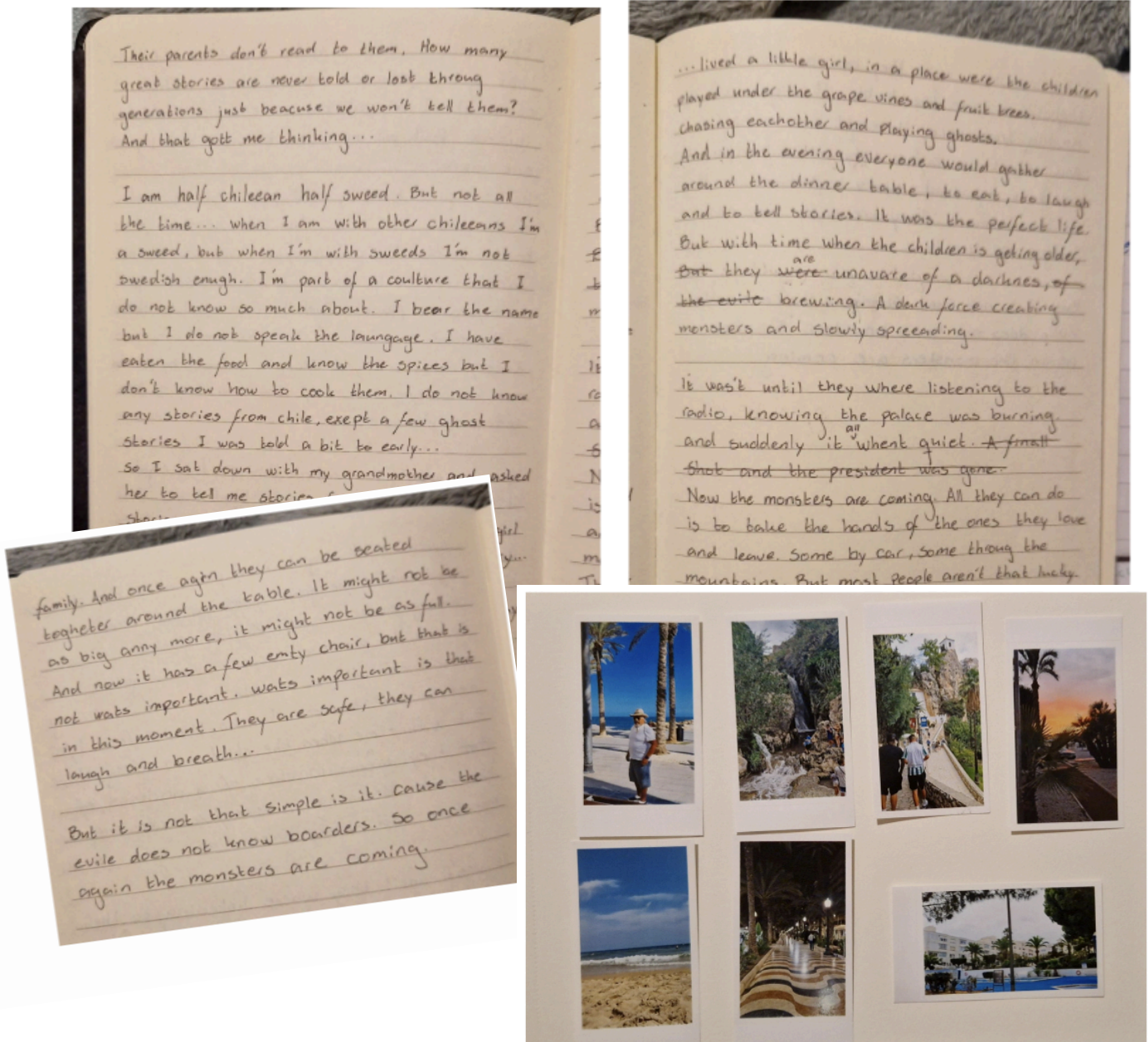
Any tips for future Cassandras

Just because it is socially engaged does not mean it is heavy! Take the opportunity to network. And reach out. The storytelling community is quite friendly and open. Ask a lot of questions. Ask mentors, or performers and the other young storytellers if they might be interested in sitting down and answering some questions. I can guarantee you that most of them will be more than happy too. Explore different kinds of stories and storytelling. You need to find the stories that are most comfortable for you.

Remember that you can talk to the other mentors as well. We all have different styles, perhaps one of the other mentors has a style that is closer to yours, and therefore can give a different type of advice.

But remember the mentor of your country, has the most experience in knowing the festival, audience and stages in your country. They can help you with contacts and to adapt your performance for those opportunities. Everyone in the project has different levels of experience in storytelling. That does not matter. Learn from each other and elevate each other Have fun! It is a really awesome project!

Story and Research



3. Mari Qviller

Performance: Breidablikk

Date: Sunday, 3 November 2025

Time: 16.00hr

Performance Blurp: *Mari Qviller wants to tell you the true story of how being dumped led her to walk all alone for 40 days in the Norwegian nature the summer before high school.*

You are invited to peek through the window of her childhood bedroom and embark on an expedition through the world's largest forest, a little detour to visit the least smelly part of old Norse mythology, and a helicopter ride out to the open sea at the edge of the world.

«Breidablikk» combines autobiography, mythical storytelling, and satire to explore the heroic story of the Norwegian oil industry.«

Storyteller Biography: **Mari Qviller** (24) is a Norwegian playwright and activist. She lives in a farm collective on an island in rural Norway. In 2022, she got her bachelor's degree in script writing from the Norwegian Actors Institute (NSKI) and debuted at Unge Viken Theatre with the play «Little Blue Men». The same year, she appeared in the mini-documentary «The Biggest Test» made by Norway's state-owned oil company Equinor. Mari worked for three years in the environmental organisation «Young Friends of the Earth», and in the spring of 2023, she occupied the Norwegian Ministry of Oil and Gas for five days with fellow environmental and Sami activists.

In 2024, Mari's theatre company has been on tour with her original play «Mausoleum».

For the next two years, she has been granted the state artists scholarship and is working on bringing new queer art to young people in rural Norway.



Artist Statement Sheet

Can you describe your performance in 5 words?

Filmatic, personal, activist, contrasts, adventure.

Tell us more about the performance you made, the tone, structure, and narrative.

I wanted to make a fragmented story where you don't really know where you're going. The tone varies for everyday problems to big existential crises, and I use a lot of humor to make the contrast from the dark reality we live in bigger. The narrative uses Norse myths as a structure, and the real personal story I tell mirrors the myths I present in a symbolic way. There is a lot of interpretation room in what the different scenes may mean, but in the end, I wanted it to be a strong political message.

What key moments or elements do you think will resonate most with your audience? How did you achieve this?

I think humor makes the theme less scary, but the more «horror-movie» scenes I think are the most powerful in the story. From the response I have gotten, the description of my childhood memories from the forest was the thing they could see most clearly, and felt the most sympathy with me as the protagonist of the story.

How did you integrate your research and the community voices into your performance?

I saw the need for a story where I explicitly talk about oil politics in an entertaining way that doesn't scare away people who disagree with me before the show is over. I saw that their relationship to nature was powerful, so to combine those two elements to make a bridge was the biggest inspiration from the research.

What challenges have you faced in creating your performance?

I am not a stage performer usually. To make the performance and the material was very inspiring, but I think when I went on stage in Amsterdam, I let the humor take more space than needed and then what was planned to communicate the story properly. The balance in engaging with the audience and keeping the right structure was difficult but something I learnt a lot from.

What impact do you want to create, and/or what conversations do you hope to inspire?

I hope non-Norwegians see how terrible our country is dealing with climate change, but that they appreciate nature in a way they haven't thought of before. I want to scare and alarm, but still give a chime of hope to the audience. To be explicitly activist in art is scary and often frowned upon, but I am trying to figure out how to do it, while not scaring people away from the theme.

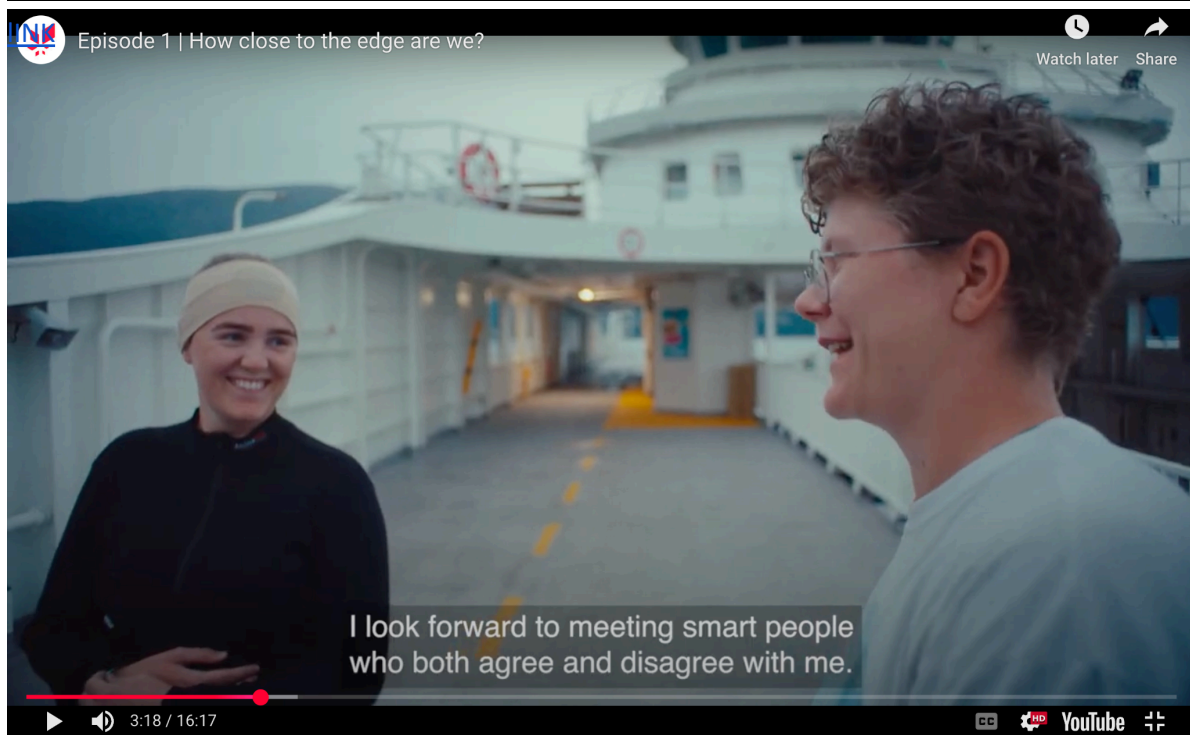
Any tips for future Cassandras

Ask questions, use the mentors, get to know the group, and maybe engage more with the mentors outside of the scheduled meetings. Talk about something that is really important to you, and use the opportunity to develop yourself.

Don't play safe. The art of storytelling was new to me, and I think the storytelling culture has a lot of room for crazy young people who challenge the format.

Research and Social Engagement

[LINK TO FILMS](#)



4. Ynys Convents

Performance: The stork that raised me - The 'Antipelargy' of a Family

Date: Monday, 4 November 2025

Time: 19.30hr

Performance Blurb: *What if you questioned conventional parenthood as you know it?*

Rooted in the concept of antipelargy – reciprocal care between parent and child – this tale uncovers deeper layers of love, memory, and the fragility of familial bonds. Ynys weaves memories into a tale that challenges the imagination and reshapes the notion of family.

Storyteller Biography: is a young storyteller based in Antwerp. She is finishing her master's degree in Dutch literature and loves to fill the gaps in her day by writing poetry. Last year, she appeared on stage as a film festival host, and this summer, she was particularly active as a social justice activist in Antwerp.

Ynys's love for connecting with an audience and her strong sense of community is reflected in her personal story, 'The Stork That Raised Me: The Antipelargy of a Family', which she will perform for you.



Artist Statement Sheet

Can you describe your performance in 5 words?

Antipelargy. Reciprocal Care, Coming-of-Age, Unconventional Parenthood, Nurturing Bonds

Tell us more about the performance you made, the tone, structure, and narrative.

The tone of The Stork That Raised Me is playful and at times spontaneous and comedic, balancing lighthearted moments with deeper emotional undertones. Structurally, the narrative consists of fragmented childhood memories interwoven with intriguing fun facts about storks, creating a layered and symbolic reflection on family dynamics. The story opens with a prelude where a mother, looking like a stork, enters the car with her children. She has just been "diagnosed" as a stork, and, unable to say it aloud, lets her children read the test result. This sets a humorous yet poignant tone.

Throughout the narrative, fun facts about storks complement and enhance the memories. For instance, the first fact explains how storks return each year to the same nest, making it stronger over time. This parallels the family's resilience. In the first fragment, a bathroom scene unfolds where the mother, resembling a stork, informs her children she cannot care for them during the Christmas holidays, and they must stay with their grandmother. The youngest daughter holds her mother's "beak" reassuringly, symbolising mutual care and understanding.

The second fun fact reveals that storks live in flocks but need solitude to thrive. This resonates with the next memory: after the Christmas holidays, the family is snowed in. The mother, overwhelmed, turns into a stork in the car. The oldest daughter calms her, and the mother retreats to her room. The children, left to their own devices, embark on an imaginative adventure where a stork helps them free a mammoth from ice—a metaphor for their mother's return to join their play.

The third fun fact introduces the Greek concept of "antipelargy," symbolising reciprocal care between parent and child. This theme culminates in a fable-like fragment about a young stork who, in her eagerness, injures her wings while trying to build her nest. The mother, forbidden to help, leaves but returns at midnight with a twig from her own nest, symbolising the painful yet necessary process of letting go and supporting independence.

In the epilogue, the family is back in the car, but this time, the mother notices that her children, too, look like storks—a tender realisation of their shared resilience and growth.

Together, these elements form a cohesive narrative about confronting personal boundaries and the mutual care between a mother and her daughters. It's a coming-of-age story that celebrates strength, vulnerability, and the enduring bond between parent and child.

What key moments or elements do you think will resonate most with your audience? How did you achieve this?

Key moments that will resonate most with the audience include the prelude, epilogue, bathroom scene, and snowed-in sequence. These scenes capture universal themes of family struggle, mutual care, and personal growth, all framed through the metaphor of the stork. This metaphor allows everyone to identify their own limits and strengths in the stork's journey.

In the prelude, the mother's playful "diagnosis" as a stork introduces a humorous yet vulnerable reflection on personal boundaries. The epilogue, where she sees her children as storks, emphasizes shared resilience and growth, inviting the audience to relate their own experiences to the family's journey.

The bathroom scene, where the youngest daughter holds her mother's "beak," symbolizes reciprocal care, resonating with anyone who has supported a loved one through difficulty. Similarly, the snowed-in sequence, blending reality and fantasy, shows how challenges can lead to moments of connection and breakthrough.

By weaving fun stork facts into these emotional milestones, the story encourages the audience to see their own struggles reflected in the stork's journey—making it a powerful, personal metaphor for resilience and care.

How did you integrate your research and the community voices into your performance?

My research on the [Mittelalter Lexicon on storks](#) was what gave me the idea to integrate stork fun facts to elevate my story. My research on [The Child and Childhood in Folk-Thought](#) inspired to me to work on phantasy and metamorphosis. The moments where the mother 'changes' into a stork come from what I read there (see question 3). [The etymology of the word antipelarqy](#) that finally served as the central theme of my story.

The community voice was my voice in this story, because I represented my family. But obviously, the characters of the mother and the sister were completely based on how caring and brave they are in real life. The point where the stork mother decides to let her child go and let her build her own nest really is an echo of my mother. She has realised that to be a good mother, she needs to trust her children to take care of themselves, her and each other as well. This is the wisdom of hers that speaks in my story.

What challenges have you faced in creating your performance?

I faced several challenges making my first solo performance. Coming up with ideas, researching and constructing my story were really just the start of a brilliant learning path for me. The first big challenge I faced was finding the structure of my story. There, it was my mentor that helped me with thinking outside of the box and building a narrative that falls apart in several fragments instead of one grand story arch. The second major challenge I faced was getting my tone right. The first few times I delivered my story, important points did not

come across clearly because I was pausing my speech at awkward times or thinking really too much in a poetic way to put my words. Also, I tended to speak in a very serious or very 'epic' way, which did not suit my story. That is why the second and third try-out I focused on pacing, pauses and having a more casual and easy way of performing. This was truly a journey, and I could still get shy or tired, which made me less focused. The same counts for my nervousness, which made me walk around a lot on stage. Finally, I worked really hard on these points and I performed in Amsterdam in a way that I was pretty satisfied with, although there is always room for improvement and more fine tuning (especially the finesse of my movements can be better).

What impact do you want to create, and/or what conversations do you hope to inspire?

I aim to create a conversation about the strength and diversity of family dynamics. I want to break the stigma about the expectations parents have of themselves. Above that I want to start a conversation on parents with (invisible) disabilities or families that diverge from the 'nuclear' family. That is why I hope my story resonates with audiences facing unique family situations, such as neurodivergent parents and their children. The impact I want to create is that I hope parents and children are less hard on themselves and are more forgiving towards themselves and each other.

Further, my goal is to refine my story further, tailoring it for outreach in schools or community spaces, particularly where families with neurodivergent members gather. There is still a path for me to explore, and I hope to inspire meaningful conversations about family, identity, and understanding.

Any tips for future Cassandras?

Start early! While finding a topic and creating a story may seem like the biggest challenges, the real growth often happens during performance. After my first test run, I realised my tone, body language, and voice didn't fully support the story's message. These became my main focus, and refining them transformed my performance. Embrace this stage—it's where your story truly comes to life.

5. Samora de Boer

Performance: Overshadowed

Date: Monday, 4 November 2025

Time: 19.30hr

Performance Blurb: *In a magical forest where fantasy and reality intertwine, the young girl, Isabel battles a dark force that affects not only her but also her loved ones. Overshadowed is the enchanting, deeply personal story of Samora de Boer that explores the impact of depression and the power of love, self-discovery and creativity. A metaphorical fable offering a profound, magical perspective on mental illness and hope.*

Storyteller Biography: **Samora de Boer** (1995) is a storyteller living in Amsterdam with a great passion for her work. After finishing her theatre studies in 2018, she has been developing her skills at the Storytelling Centre. Samora creates magical worlds that draw her audience in, inspired by nature, books, folktales, myths, fables and her own experiences. Her storytelling is known for its vivid details, helping listeners picture the characters and scenes as if they were right there.

In addition to storytelling, Samora enjoys sewing, acting, illustrating and making videos, often blending these skills into her storytelling to make it even richer. One of her dreams is to travel the world, gathering stories from different cultures and sharing them with people she meets. Her creative flair and love for exploring different cultures infuse her stories with a special magic that captivates and delights audiences.



Artist Statement

Can you describe your performance in 5 words?

Nightmares, fantasy, depression, coming of age, energy

Tell us more about the performance you made, the tone, structure, and narrative. The performance I created is a deeply personal story, reimagined in the style of a fairy tale or fable. While it draws from my own experiences, the story stands on its own without needing to reference the underlying theme of depression. The audience can recognise that it is personal, but the narrative is universal in its own right. The tone of the performance is quite dark and haunting, with the audience feeling as though they are trapped in an ongoing nightmare. This sense of unease is intentional, as it mirrors the experience of living with depression (and other mental illnesses). However, despite the darkness, the narrative emphasises that there is always light and hope at the end of the tunnel. The key message is that this light must be created or found by the individual—it's not something that happens passively. This gives the story an element of agency and empowerment, even within its darker moments.



"Imagination is the only weapon in the war against reality." — Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland.

What key moments or elements do you think will resonate most with your audience? How did you achieve this?

I believe the moment when the character rediscovers her passion and creativity will resonate strongly with the audience. Many people can relate to the experience of abandoning something that once brought them joy because they were made to feel that it was "childish" or "not normal," often due to external judgment or bullying. In this story, the character abandons her creativity after being teased and bullied for it, and in doing so, she loses a part of herself. The moment when she reclaims that creativity is powerful, and I wanted to highlight how much strength comes from reconnecting with what truly brings us happiness.

I built up this moment throughout the story by showing how the treehouse—once her favorite and most creative space—represented her childlike playfulness. However, this side of her is slowly pushed aside and eventually disappears as she begins to feel ashamed of it due to the bullying she faced. By weaving this development into the narrative, I created a buildup that makes her eventual rediscovery of her creativity feel like a major, transformative moment. Another scene that I believe will resonate is the one where the monster controls Isabel like a puppet. This represents the feeling of being manipulated or powerless, which is something many people with mental health struggles can identify with. The experience of not being in control of your own actions or emotions is a common challenge for those facing mental illness, and I aimed to convey this feeling visually so the audience can relate to the emotional weight of the scene.

How did you integrate your research and the community voices into your performance?

One of the key themes that emerged from my research and conversations with others was the intense loneliness that many people experience, especially when feeling trapped in their own thoughts or circumstances. Several individuals I spoke with expressed how isolating it can feel to struggle with mental health, and this sense of being alone became a central aspect of my performance. I integrated this into the performance by portraying the character's isolation—not just physically, but emotionally—emphasising the feeling of being disconnected from others. The character's internal struggle is represented visually and thematically, reflecting how loneliness often accompanies mental health challenges. This sense of solitude in the performance was meant to make the audience feel the emotional weight of the character's experience, connecting it to the larger universal theme of isolation that many people can relate to. By incorporating these voices and experiences, I aimed to make the story more relatable and to convey the emotional depth of loneliness, something that resonates with many in the community.

What challenges have you faced in creating your performance?

One of the challenges I faced was discovering that many of my memories felt "lost." I believe my mind, possibly as a form of self-protection, has buried certain memories that I can no longer access, making it difficult to unlock them. At first, this made the process of writing and creating feel superficial, as I couldn't fully tap into my past experiences. I didn't push myself to dig deeply into those memories, but the ones I could access and process were the ones I worked with. These memories felt "ready" to be explored and incorporated into the performance, and I focused on developing those rather than forcing myself to unearth more that I wasn't ready to confront.



What impact do you want to create, and/or what conversations do you hope to inspire?

I hope to create a sense of recognition and inspiration for those who are struggling with feeling "stuck" or dealing with depression. I want them to see themselves in the story and feel that they're not alone while also offering a sense of hope that things can get better. Additionally, I hope to raise awareness among those who may not be familiar with mental health struggles, helping them understand how a mental disorder can affect someone. On the outside, a person may seem "dead" or distant, but inside, there can be a lot of emotional turmoil and complexity. Ultimately, I want people to feel understood and inspired, to realise the power of creativity in healing, and to hold on to hope, even in dark times.

6. Natalia Drąka

Performance: Aurora - Daughter of the Dawn

Date: Monday, 4 November 2025

Time: 19.30hr

Performance Blurb: *A girl waiting for her father's return from war sends out a final plea into the night, begging to reclaim her lost childhood. Whom or what does she summon?*

This is a tale of longing for the irretrievable, of anger and defiance, difficult relationships, growing up, coming to terms with the past and identity, and fighting for oneself.

Storyteller Biography: One night, **Natalia Drąka** (Poland) fell in love with stories in an old, abandoned mill, poring over a book of fairy tales and folk legends. In stories, she discovers the real lives of people who, like her, feel longing, fear, and love. A passionate musician, she follows the sound of music wherever it calls her. She sings and plays for loved ones and strangers in the forest, in the shower, on stage, and even while washing dishes. She believes deeply that every story is a song, and every song is a story. She craves the presence of people, the warmth of a fire, the scent of the earth, and most of all, she needs to tell stories and, even more so, to listen because it is the act of listening that makes us human.

Although she has been sharing her stories for only two years, she has participated in key storytelling events, including the National Storytelling Festival in Radom and the annual Story Walk in Wirty. She hones her craft through her involvement with storytelling groups like Kolektyw Opowieści Tamdarym and Karawana Opowieści.





7. Hanna Asefaw

Performance: How to Rebuild a Meadow

Date: Monday, 4 November 2025

Time: 21.00hr

Performance Blurb: *Once upon a time, there was a flower that had forgotten how to bloom. This is a story about a flower. And a boy. And resilience, resistance, hope, and loss.*

In "How to Rebuild a Meadow", you are invited on a journey - a flower's journey from being weighed down by contaminated soil to, hopefully, breaking through to the surface.

In the summer of 2023, Hanna was rarely seen without a camera. She used it to document her travels in Eritrea, the country her parents had fled from due to a war that lasted three decades. This story is based on pictures Hanna took during that summer and is shared in honour of all the people who continue to coexist with and take care of the soil.

Storyteller Biography: **Hanna Asefaw** (NO/ER) is a human geographer, writer, and performing artist based in Oslo.

Through play, research and investigation of themes related to identity, liberation, and the memories that are stuck in our bodies, Hanna's work seeks to unravel, understand, and reconstruct - to convey the relationship between the personal and political, as well as the individual and structural dimensions of experience.

Her artistic practice is influenced by interdisciplinary exploration and experimentation, drawing on diverse traditions of poetry, movement, and music. Hanna's performances and writings often blend these elements in an attempt to create a language and dialogue that reflect the intricate connections between the inner and outer worlds. Her work invites audiences to engage with and reflect on the complex narratives that shape our lives, searching and fostering a deeper understanding of both personal and collective stories.



Artist Statement

Can you describe your performance in 5 words?

Necessary, challenging, connective, personal (but also) collective

Tell us more about the performance you made, the tone, structure, and narrative.

I borrowed some elements from traditional stories (once upon a time), but the goal was always to connect it with something "real", which I chose to do by including a photograph from Eritrea, but also starting and ending with my own perspectives. The tone was perhaps a bit longing, dreamy and melancholic.

What key moments or elements do you think will resonate most with your audience? How did you achieve this?

I think that might be the part where the flower and the boy meet each other, their whole relation, the song and the picture in the very end. I worked a lot with intentionally making the characters representatives for something bigger than themselves, which I believe may have made them "relatable".

How did you integrate your research and the community voices into your performance?

I'm not quite sure how to put it in another way than that they were "always there". They were represented through the characters, the storyline, and the melodies. They were there in every thought behind every line.

What challenges have you faced in making your performing your solo?

The biggest challenge was to turn all the voices and conversations into a single story. I just constantly felt like there were so many things that needed to be said. "Cut what you dare" was a helpful method.

What impact do you want to create, and/or what conversations do you hope to inspire?

Understanding of how personal experiences are connected to big structures and world politics.
Understanding of how important resistance is.

Any tips for future Cassandras?

Remember to connect with your future colleagues!

Script Excerpt

Fueled by grief, denial, and perhaps... a little hope.

Hope—hope that this was not what was left of the boy.

Hope that he was just out fetching water.

Hope that the promises were not broken—

After all, they'd promised each other:
to be each other's shelter, to take care of one another, to grow old together.

Fueled by all this— *the flower sang.*

"I can't afford to disappoint again."

Calling for the boy,
it sang—

"I can't afford to disappoint again."

Louder and louder—

"I can't afford to disappoint again!"

And then—

The flower grew.

It found every glimpse of sunlight in between
the rust
and grew.

To the left,

it grew.

To the right,

it grew.

Towards the sky—

it grew.

And it grew until it became bigger than all the
death machines.

Until the land finally became a meadow again.

It's still growing.

It's still searching, looking for the boy.

The hope has grown stronger than the grief.

Perhaps... because the flower doesn't know
what we know.

Because we know the boy won't come back.

We know he never got old enough to have any
descendants.

But we also know this:

If he was given the chance to live a little longer,
they would have seen the meadow he helped
bring back to life.

And perhaps—

perhaps they'd be able to hear the whole
meadow singing:

*"In a meadow,
embraced with growth,
nearly blossoming...*

I'm nearly blossoming...

I'm nearly blossoming."

[Pause]

Open your eyes.

I am the flower.

I am the boy.

The meadow is my home.

8. Daan Arnauts

Performance: Have You Ever Been Called A Whore?

Date: Monday, 4 November 2025

Time: 21.00hr

Performance Blurb: *In a quest for love, you may come across people who have some very different opinions and definitions of what love entails. For Daan, a seventeen-year-old gay boy in Belgium was no different. Shocked but also intrigued about everything thrown onto his path, he went to find someone who could give him more insight. A person who would change his entire worldview.*

Have You Ever Been Called A Whore takes you on a journey of deception, kinks and a lot of money. When one message can change everyday life into something much, much more interesting.... *a quest for love where nothing seems to be about love*

Storyteller Biography: Hi there! I'm **Daan Arnauts**, from Brussels, Belgium, and I developed a passion for theatre and storytelling years ago. Finishing my theatre studies this year, I feel empowered to perform for you.

I like to convey a message, surrounding it with humour and lightness. That being said, depth is, of course, still present in the projects where I put my heart in. I put my heart at this moment in passions, which are theatre, storytelling and Waacking! In the last three years, I found a dance style originally from the west coast of America created by the queer and POC community. A dance style with a lot of expression, fast arm movement and funk.



Artist Statement

Can you describe your performance in 5 words?

Fantasy, Journey, Sex and Love

Tell us more about the performance you made, the tone, structure, and narrative.

A boy wants to find love and goes on a dating app, and he magically falls into a wonderland to find love. This mission goes wrong after he continuously ends up with the wrong people until he gives up on this online world and gets back to real life.

What key moments or elements do you think will resonate most with your audience? How did you achieve this?

The moments the prince fights back, gets betrayed and goes back to real life. I intentionally chose to make these moments big because I feel like they're an important part of the emotional journey I went on.

How did you integrate your research and the community voices into your performance?

I downloaded the app again, looked around at the things I could use to make this world something an audience can recognise such as the sound notifications, the different random people you come across unasked for... and finally the boost or in the show the lightning strikes which gets your profile even more reactions that you sometimes don't want

What challenges have you faced in creating your performance?

The want to add more and more things that can't fit but then also finding the guidance with a mentor who gave me a way to still have every chapter in. I kept getting pushed toward having to scratch stuff, but that isn't always necessary. Sometimes it's about getting to the point, and that for me in my whole process with every part of the story was the most difficult point because I just keep on yapping.

What impact do you want to create, and/or what conversations do you hope to inspire?

To not get your hopes up about online dating and that finding a person in the real world is just always a better bet because you get to see who they really are...

Any tips for future Cassandras?

Try, do and fail; use everything you get and be grateful for that. It's a big chance...

Journal Pages

Cassandra

As an artist I like to contribute with lightness, joyfulness and humor
I want to develop a funny bone with warmth towards people which
I can use to make problems and issues close to my heart translate
to a wider public.

CASSANDRA:

- GAY Schmerz (Grinde Erwärmung)
- Seks normaliseren
- 2 jobs naast elkaar houden (vergelijkbaar met vergelijking)
- Durf te dragen (built-in pleasures)
- Onele? Onlyform?
- Voorzichtig niet per se fout persoon niet volledig

Stoppenplan Cassandra

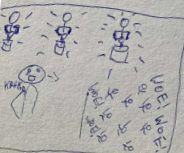
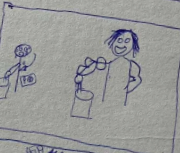
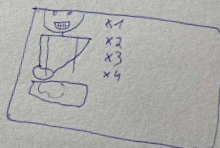
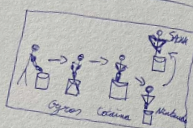
- Veronique spreken
- Verhalen schrijven
→ Hoevel vogo is er van mezelf aan toe (zijn verhaal en van hun verhalen)
- Hoe laat ik het verder gaan dan het podium
- Maak ik het breed naar de maatschappij toe

Vragen & AANPAK

- Vragen voorbereiden hebben meer flexibel
→ Hoe sta je tegenover de vraag: "Hoe vaak doe je deze job?"
→ Must hebben afspreek, "hoeveel" en meest speciale

- Mail schrijven naar
- dat invullen later
- tekst naar
- Vragen naar

Print persen tekeningen:



9. Wera Kątna

Performance: Bed Story

Date: Monday, 4 November 2025

Time: 21.00hr

Performance Blurb: *Have you ever heard voices in your head before going to sleep?*

Tala listens to them every night. She sets off on a journey to find a place without them. On her way, she fights with monsters who live under the beds.

But is there a way to fight them all forever and fall asleep in peace?

Storyteller Biography: **Wera Kątna** is a young creator and performer based in Poznań, Poland. Her main passions are art, culture, and dance in its many forms. As a practitioner, she is developing her skills in off-theatre, performance art, improvisation, movement, and poetry. Wera is well-known within the spoken poetry and slam community, where her work is often recognised and awarded. Throughout her journey, she has collaborated with various theatre groups on numerous productions.

In her storytelling research, she explores transdisciplinary methods to blend her diverse interests. Through her unique narratives, she invites audiences to connect with shared human experiences. Her world is infused with absurdity and curiosity. And poetry, obviously.

Wera has participated in several international projects and festivals, and has traveled extensively—often spontaneously. After gaining valuable insights from both formal and non-formal education, she began dance studies to explore movement as a therapeutic tool. She loves to move and is ready to move the world.

Gallery





10. Dawid Pigut

Performance: Tangled

Date: Tuesday, 5 November 2025

Time: 19.30hr

Performance Blurb: *A story of ups and downs, of happiness and tears. A tale heard somewhere in a small town, in a place that holds many different stories – a hair salon. What was the treasure for the main character? Why did she shed so many tears? Did she lose something, or perhaps she came to understand something? You'll find out by listening to my story.*

Storyteller Biography: Hey, my name is **Dawid Pigut** (Poland); I'm eighteen years old, and I'm not only a student but also a beginner hairdresser on a daily basis. I like it when my work gives someone pleasure. I paint not only my hair but also pictures, but I don't use a brush for this, but rather words. I also have the extraordinary pleasure of participating in the Cassandra project; in fact, I am just taking my first steps in the world of storytelling, but I look at this world with great admiration.



Artist Statement

Can you describe your performance in 5 words?

- Relationships
- Tradition
- Fear
- Joy
- Escape**

Tell us more about the performance you made, the tone, structure, and narrative.

I told the story with varying expressions. In the beginning, I spoke in the first person, introducing myself. Later, I narrated as an observer, sometimes quoting the words of the main character.

What key moments or elements do you think will resonate most with your audience? How did you achieve this?

Interaction with the audience: asking them to repeat Polish words. Reflection at the very end, where I spoke in the voice of the main character.

How did you integrate your research and the community voices into your performance?

I talked about the somewhat cruel Jewish tradition of cutting women's hair after marriage, as well as the issue of abuse in marriages.

I spoke with a hairdresser who performs so-called "golden cuts," cutting people's hair in a way that allows them to gain something new and symbolically let go of a sometimes difficult past.

I also had a meeting with a wig maker who told me about Orthodox Jewish women wearing wigs. Both of these individuals showed me how significant hair is for women, which greatly helped me in creating my story.

What challenges have you faced in creating your performance?

Since my English isn't as good as I'd like it to be, language was the main challenge for me. However, I managed to tell my story in two languages. Unclear sentences were displayed in English on a projector.

The second challenge for me was movement—I initially hesitated to embrace the full scale of the stage. But through practice, I managed to develop appropriate gestures.

What impact do you want to create, and/or what conversations do you hope to inspire?

I want to draw attention to the often very difficult journey one must take to find oneself.

Script Excerpt

Rachel and Eli lived well for four Hanukkahs. They even had two children. However, at some point, something started to go wrong. The pub that Eli had taken over from his parents was no longer popular, and the business was no longer profitable. Eli began to look into the glass of alcohol more and more often, and a chill of disaffection blew through the house. Rachel tried to fight for their marriage by seeking all kinds of solutions, but Eli didn't want her help. He opposed her and started quarreling. The only time Rachel could calm down was when she sat down at her piano. She felt herself flowing along with the music she was playing, and her body seemed to float above the ground.

When Eli came home one evening, Rachel was playing her instrument. This angered him very much, and something inside him snapped. He grabbed a jug and smashed some keys of the piano with extreme anger. Rachel looked into his eyes with rage and cried. Then, she picked up a pair of scissors lying nearby and began to destroy her wig.

She cut off strand after strand until not a single strand remained. She left the house and went to the hairdresser. Let's assume it was me.... But we know that it was not me.

There, having taken off her wig, she felt completely naked; after all, she was showing her real hair. The hairdresser styled Rachel's short hair so that she could feel more like herself again. She then asked herself: "Who am I now?" She felt ashamed but also happy to have something back. I am Rachel, a young woman with dark brown hair.

She returned home. She packed herself and the children into a few suitcases. On her way out of the house, together with the children, she took one last look into the eyes of Eli sitting on the sofa. And the question popped into her head once again:

"Who am I now?"

'I am becoming my true self. I've already got my hair back. I am starting to write my story all over again. I'm going to look for more parts of myself.'

She closed this door behind her.

11. Meja Johansson

Performance: The Tallest Mountain in the World

Date: Tuesday, 5 November 2025

Time: 19.30hr

Performance Blurb: In The Tallest Mountain in the World, Meja Johansson will bring you along on the frustrating journey that is finding out what you truly believe in. Told as a classic fairytale, we follow our heroine as she climbs. Each mountain she reaches will bring her closer to understanding the mysteries of the divine. Is there a god? And if so, how does one find him?

Storyteller Biography: My name is **Meja Johansson**, and I come from the small town of Ljungby, Sweden. Growing up in a small town where art and culture are surprisingly present, I have always found myself drawn to storytelling in many different forms. Art and working with my hands have long been a creative outlet for me, but in later years, I have also taken an interest in music and theatre. I like to explore the intersection of storytelling, painting, theatre, and music and want to push the boundaries of my own creativity.

Now, for the first time, I will be performing a self-written story inspired by my own, and others, journey to faith.

Until recently, I studied cultural heritage studies at university, and I am currently working as a trainee at the Swedish Church, where I hope to bring oral storytelling to light as a powerful tool in communicating with our community.



Artist Statement

Tell us about your theme. Why did you choose it?

I chose it because I feel that it is a very human thing to always be searching for the next thing. It is something that I myself relate to, and I thought it would be nice to have a theme that many people could recognise themselves in on many different levels.

Did you engage with any groups, individuals, or specialists? If yes, how did you engage with them? What did you discover? If not, how did you carry out your research?

I engaged with different people who have gone from being atheists to believing in God. My main focus was on people who have found Christianity since it was the most accessible for me. I had a couple of one-on-one interviews with people but found that the most rewarding conversations were group discussions.

Can you describe any challenges or barriers you had to your research and engagement with others?

Some people who came from very strict religious groups did not want to share their stories because they were afraid of how they would be used. Because of this, I didn't really get the perspective of anyone who has a very different outlook than me, which was a shame.

What about Success? What are you pleased about regarding your research and outreach engagement?

I think that the people I talked to felt relaxed and ready to share, and I feel pleased that I succeeded in creating a nice and allowing environment in the interviews and discussions since that was very important to me.

What advice would you give to future people doing a CASSANDRA-like programme?

I would advise people to start their interviews early. It was much harder than I thought to find people to talk to, and I think I would have gotten to talk to a wider range of people if I had just had the time.

Gallery



12. Sarah Andersson

Performance: Success Has Many Fathers, But Failure Is An Orphan

Date: Tuesday, 5 November 2025

Time: 19.30hr

Performance Blurb: *In a pond, not too shallow yet not too deep, the frogs sing for their king and queen, who neither appreciate nor tolerate their existence. Is it worth singing for those who do not appreciate it? They are ruled over ruthlessly until one day, the common marsh frog decides to change itself, to become like its oppressors, to sing like a bird.*

This froggy tale has been created with both children's rights organisations and experts on the topic of domestic violence. It is a story about finding your place and identity, the importance of safety and self-esteem and most importantly, opening up, breaking cycles and accepting help when it finds you even if the shadow of a stork looms over you.

Storyteller Biography: Born in the early 2000s and raised in the woods of southern Sweden with a passion for fairytales and plastic toys, meet me, **Sarah Andersson**! Bold colours, bold personality, friend of amphibians and reptiles, I'm full of life, embracing my quirky oddities and excited to share! Twenty-four years of age and studying for my bachelor's in library and information science, this young storyteller (ME!) is hoping to bring oral storytelling to her future workplaces.

Since forever, I've been enticed by stories, whether oral, written or animated; they've captured me. Everything has a story to tell, such as the mist that lay atop of the lakes during early mornings, that's the fairies dancing. My grandmother once told me this, and to this day, that is what I see and hear when I look at the mist gliding over the still waters.

Gallery





13. Geoffrey van der Ven

Performance: What's the difference?

Date: Tuesday, 5 November 2025

Time: 21.00hr

Performance Blurb: *Remember the first time you felt “different”? Neither does Geoffrey, but that feeling has grown familiar over time. In “What's the Difference,” spoken word artist Geoffrey van der Ven delves into the emotions of shame and personal isolation. Through storytelling and spoken word, he uncovers how these feelings shape our lives and challenge us to do the one thing shame stops us from doing.*

Storyteller Biography: **Geoffrey van der Ven** beholds the world with a curious eye. He experiences, listens, and brings stories to the forefront. His pieces are sharp, critical, and often activist in nature. His performances are personal and centred around queer and BIPOC identities. With his vibrant energy, he keeps the audience engaged, providing them with space to breathe and reflect between pieces.

As a spoken word artist and theatre maker, Geoffrey tells stories that have long gone unheard. Currently, he is touring with his solo show ‘Het is niet Nieuw’ (It's Nothing New), in which he highlights the queer history of Africa. Previously, he won the ‘Poet of the Year’ Award at the Queer & Feminist Poetry Awards and received an Honorary mention at Button Poetry, his work was featured at the Eurovision Song Contest, and he has performed at major venues and events such as the Nieuwe Luxor Theater, Rotterdam Pride, and Amsterdam Fringe Festival.



Artist Statement

Can you describe your performance in 5 words?

The journey of shame

Tell us more about the performance you made, the tone, structure, and narrative.

The performance uses my personal story, psychological explanations and a Greek tale that connects to the ugly duckling to explain why and how humans experience shame. How we react to this feeling and what we need to do to overcome this

What key moments or elements do you think will resonate most with your audience? How did you achieve this?

I'm really not sure, but I think it sets the stage for feeling different. Taking the time to show what this could feel like, and that it can be experienced in many different ways. I asked a few friends both queer and non-queer if they could relate to the story and they all said yes. And I think/hope it is because of that setting the stage aspect at the beginning of the show 10. How did you integrate your research and the community voices into your performance?

When I tell the tale of nyctamine, I pour everything I learned into her, how we react, the masks we put on, the running away, the feeling of being lonely, but also distancing ourselves from everyone, the resulting anger. These were all elements of my own, but also the interviewed journeys, and all come back in what psychologists describe.

What challenges have you faced in creating your performance?

I needed to find a tale that I could use to convey what I wanted. I had two bucks of knowledge, and these debunked any historic tales of shame. Realising that most of them were actually about guilt, embarrassment or being shamed (there is a difference), eventually I found a very short tale and decided to run with that and make the story that it needed to be myself.

What impact do you want to create, and/or what conversations do you hope to inspire? *I want to shine a light on a very overlooked and extremely damaging part of the human experience, and I hope that it causes people to reflect and wonder if/why the story resonated with them, and that they, because of that, start talking about it. It is one of the only things that helps fight the feeling*

Any tips for future Cassandras

Take charge of your creative journey. If you don't know what it is, then enjoy finding out, and keep in close contact with your mentor. Also, reach out to EVERYONE that you think could help you in this project. I've seen that each and every one of the mentors and participants is super willing to help you, and through them, your network is huge!

Script Excerpt

And I do remember moments. I remember crying because I scratched our neighbour's car and despite my parent's comforting, I knew other boys didn't cry from things like that. And I remember I always walked differently, my shoulders too high, and my neck too long. Or I remember playing more with the girls in school cause the boys played rough and were mean to me. I remember how, over time, the feeling slowly settled in. Every year, every subtle interaction, there wasn't an on off moment. It was a gradual curve that eventually became home. And I'm ok with it now. Though, I still deal with the feeling on a daily basis. But it wasn't always like that. I didn't know it yet. But the feeling that I am describing, is Shame. And after some digging I realised that I was, and still am, coping with feelings of shame. Over being different.

Now what's important to know is that we often mix up guilt, embarrassment and shame. But there is a difference. Guilt and embarrassment are based on what you do, they are evaluations of your actions. So I do something, and I see it negatively affects someone else, so I feel guilty. Or I did something, and it made me look weird in public, now I'm embarrassed. The difference with shame is that it is based on your identity. It is an evaluation of self. This evaluation is triggered by an observation of difference, and leads to a self-punishing acknowledgement that something is wrong about you. About who you are.

So where guilt and embarrassment are based on action, shame is based on your identity. And the problem is that shame makes you do everything in your power to avoid more shame. You start hiding, lashing out, adjusting, all to avoid either being different, or having others notice the difference. Including not talking about shame. And I hope to break that cycle tonight.

In Dutch, it gets even worse because we use the same word for shame and embarrassment, and you have to go back to old Dutch to find the distinction in the word gene. And these emotions do tend to come hand in hand.

So this story, this story doesn't start with me. And it doesn't start with my friend. And as I continued searching, and reading mischaracterisation of shame, I eventually stumbled upon the tale of Nyctimene.

As usual, there are many versions of the tale, but all of them describe her to be the most beautiful princess, daughter of the king of Lesbos. In the tale, the daughter flees an advancement from the king, her father, and finds refuge in a forest. So overcome by what this must say about her that she refuses to be seen in daylight. She wanders around endlessly, through trees and shrubs and at the slightest hint of sunrise, she finds a cave, a tree trunk, a ditch to hide herself in, never to be seen by another human or creature.

14. Seimen Tobias

Performance: Modern Masturbation

Date: Tuesday, 5 November 2025

Time: 21.00hr

Performance Blurb: *A story about Sexual Awakening. A story about growing up in a digital era. A story about connection, about disintegration, about sexual philosophy, about digital pornography. A story about love, sex and masturbation. And above all, this is a search to find out how all those things really work in a world where we spend as much time with our screens as we do with our partners. This is a confrontation with Modern Masturbation.*

Storyteller Biography: Seimen Tobias (Norway). My goal has always been to connect to people. To dare to ask questions, though they might be difficult, both to reflect on and to answer. Or maybe they're easy. It's not up to me to answer all questions, but I sincerely believe in the importance of sharing, talking about and get to the core of all aspects of what it means to be human.

As both an actor, a teacher and a facilitator, I have witnessed so many moments of transformation erupting from physical presence and deep interhuman connection. This is what I seek, above all. To be present with others and to let our collective presence move us and change us.



Artist Statement

Can you describe your performance in 5 words?

Honest and open pornography conversation.

Tell us more about the performance you made, the tone, structure, and narrative.

It is a parallel growing-up story. My personal upgrowing and the birth and rise of the internet. I use fantasy and "universe creation" as metaphors and symbols of the child's playful nature, the desire to explore and have fun. The "universe creation" also becomes a parallel to the way that the internet rapidly expands and starts to evolve into more than a digital library and Wikipedia, but it starts to take over the social connectivity and becomes the main stage for play and games.

I intentionally set the tone of happy nostalgia, thinking "back to the times" before the internet was in our pockets and on our wrists. I softly and optimistically take the audience through the era of discmen, CDs, movie boxes, button phones and ipods, still being outside in the street, playing all sorts of games. The internet entered the stage, and with Habbo Hotel and MSN, the foregoers to the modern social media, people started to spend increasing amounts of time inside in front of their screens. Much of our social connections have now moved into the online world.

Here, I tell the story about the first time I fell in love, how we started a relationship and how we started to explore our sexuality. All online. The next "phase" of the performance is more varied and depends on the setting and the situation. I ask questions. Both to myself, which I can explore through sharing personal experience, thoughts and research findings, and maybe most importantly, I ask some questions that I just leave open to the "audience".

I actively set the tone of recognition, a child's innocence and curiosity, before I open up the theme of sexuality and pornography. I welcome the audience into a world where we can safely explore and question "shameful" or "difficult" topics.

I also really seek to be open in the second phase so that the performance is true to what lives inside of me, honestly, and true to the meeting with the audience. I believe this is one of the most effective ways to make the performance socially engaging. I then seek to find out what is alive in the room we are in, how my story and my sharing are of importance to THIS group and THIS room.

What key moments or elements do you think will resonate most with your audience? How did you achieve this?

I think it was a key moment when I first saw the word PORNOGRAPHY. I will let it ring and resonate a bit, as it is a word many find quite tense in itself. Here, I think it is really important to be aware of how to build both trust and ease and a connection with the audience beforehand. To create a warm, trustful atmosphere. Then, to really commit to the way, I do not want to be a teacher or a moral guide, but really want to ask some questions I find important and want the audience to think about for themselves. It is then important to keep breathing and to be consciously calm in the phase where I explore the questions and topic of pornography.

How did you integrate your research and the community voices into your performance?

Firstly I would not have done this project if not for the way I experienced its importance during the research. Now, I try to integrate everything I have learned and everything I am still learning and exploring with each and every conversation and performance. It is an ever growing performance, and the stories, perspectives and knowledge I gather from all around really help me expand both my work and the meetings.

What challenges have you faced in making your performance, your solo?

I have faced the challenge of questioning the importance of my project. To find the right form to make the performance important not only for my own sake and my own personal healing, but rather find out how to make it important for the whole group and society. I find it both challenging and strengthening to ask myself WHY I do this, WHY I tell this story, and Who is it for? And if the answer is that it is «for me» then I have to find other angles and perspectives, because it is really important for me that the performance should be for the entire group. Working with personal stories can also be a real challenge concerning your own personal engagement in the topic and in your own mental health. As an artist, I believe that you always have to seek the balance of what is too little and too much to take with you on the stage and into your art. We work from ourselves, that is where all art comes from, the soul, but we are also professionals. To keep the private separate from the artistic personal is a fine balance, and an extremely interesting one too.

What impact do you want to create, and/or what conversations do you hope to inspire?

I want people to think about their sexual health. I want people to consider how they use their sexual energies, I want people to question what Porn does to us as individuals and as a society. I want people to dig into themselves and find out what part of themselves they want to face and which patterns and behavior they want to change. I want to encourage people to be more open, honest and passionate about their lives.

15. Winter De Cock

Performance: Not Your Girl

Date: Tuesday, 5 November 2025

Time: 21.00hr

Performance Blurb: *Maybe we knew all along. Maybe we were warned by the old stories full of fantasy transmitted and performed two thousand years ago. Daphne is a girl who doesn't like men. She messes up her hair and makes herself dirty. But it doesn't matter how dirty she gets; she stays an object of desire for Apollo, who chases her in the forest. She runs away from him in vain. But when he is about to catch her, something mysterious happens...*

Not Your Girl weaves auto-fiction and myth, asking enduring questions of female objectification, agency and consent.

Storyteller Biography: **Winter De Cock**, born in 2002, became fascinated by storytelling after high school, where she learned all about stories like Ovid's metamorphoses. These stories trigger her for several reasons: on the one hand, there is the imagination, the beauty and the poetry; on the other hand, there is the patriarchal hierarchy they reflect.

After writing media and performance studies at the Royal Conservatory of Antwerp, she discovers the power of telling a story herself. She reinvents and reshapes the ancient stories, combining and associating them with new and other stories with female main characters today through a labyrinth, a puzzle, and a journey. She starts with subjects that affect her personally and searches for the ideal medium for this specific story. What does the story need? Whether she's performing, acting, podcasting or telling a story, she always invites you to listen well. If you do so, you will hear the soul of the story, the heartbeat of humanity.



Artist Statement

Can you describe your performance in 5 words?

Age of coming – male gaze – body – uncomfortable – fear

Tell us more about the performance you made, the tone, structure, and narrative.

My story was a collage of four different stories that I cut up and wove together. Where I start very personal, I end with the ancient story of Daphne and Apollo. I take the audience through my own experiences, which are very close to me. Also in my voice use, volume and manner of narration I varied between intense/heavy and a lighter / funny narration tone. In the last story, all my other stories come back by using references, literal quotes or the same images. In this way the circle is complete. Thanks to this technique, you also learn more about my beginning at the end.

What key moments or elements do you think will resonate most with your audience? How did you achieve this?

I think I succeeded in leaving a feeling behind. A feeling of recognition, disappointment and envy. I also felt that many people could (unfortunately) relate to my story. That in this way I could remove the taboo and open a conversation. I was able to accomplish this by talking to many people, reading up on it and diving into my own experiences.

How did you integrate your research and the community voices into your performance?

One of my stories comes from a book, which I read thanks to someone I spoke with. After reading this book, I invited female friends over (asked them to read the relevant chapter) and we talked about. Thanks to this, it was really easy to open a conversation and to discuss how they've felt before in their lives in similar situations.

What challenges have you faced in making your performance?

Because the project was spread out over a very long time, it always felt like there was a lot of time left. So it was sometimes difficult to fully commit and focus on it because the deadline remained so far away.

What impact do you want to create, and/or what conversations do you hope to inspire?

I hope we realize that this issue cannot be normalised. We continue to talk about it and recognise that we have already taken many steps (in society), but that there is still a long way to go.

Any tips for future Cassandras?

Talk about your project with people who have nothing to do with it, but also use the opportunity to engage with the other participants/mentors and storytellers. Be open for feedback and trust the process!!

Script Excerpt

Twelve showerheads

Against a wall
White tiles alternated with deep blue tiles
Shower buttons and sensors actually
You don't really have to press it,
When the sensor feels motion, the water automatically begins to flow.
On the floor, beige tiles
Wet
Under the shower heads the same beige tiles, a little lower, leading to a drain.
I hoist my body out of the Olympic swimming pool
Around my eyes, circles from my goggles
My body is tired
My limbs tingle
I just swam a mile and a half in less than half an hour
- I don't know if that's very fast in general -
But it's my new record
With my proud body I walk along the pool to the shower room
It's crowded
I decide to wait a while
Hope people will leave as soon as their shower automatically stopped flowing
That this will make them clear that they've been standing here long enough
It's hot
The steam sticks to my skin
The smell of chlorine has given way to a stinging smell of shampoo.
Coconut shampoo.
The hot water washes the effort from my body
I feel calm, relaxed
I close my eyes
The water runs over my hair, down my face, my neck, my shoulders, breasts, belly,
hips, thighs, legs
Into the drain
When I open my eyes,
I see, ...
I feel...
His eyes on my body
They slide, like the water, along me
Along my hair, down my face, my neck, shoulders Get stuck at my breasts
His eyes are burning on my body

