

Artistic theory on **Yellow** / **Yellow** Manifest

Draft

Stalingrad HW, 2012/2013

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## Artistic theory on **Yellow** | **Yellow** Manifest

### *On Stalingrad*

Stalingrad is an organization/artists–project that acts in different domains with different activities.

- Stalingrad Studio develops and implements strategies for consumer/citizen interactive participation. Until recently our clients were merely commercial brands and organizations. We are working on a transition to a different client type and projects for non–for–profit orgs, system innovation and Ideas–start–up. The studio is not an ad–agency. Concepting is its main activity. This activity is still pursued but the knowledge and experience is re–routed to Stalingrad HW.
- Developing and managing Peppeer.com as a Social Discovery Platform that connect individuals and small groups all over the globe.
- Visiting, consulting and intervening in organizations and create a temporary ‘Stalingrad Enclave’ for change and participation. This interfering ‘spatial narrative’ is a follow–up of the Case Study House Omega (csho) projects the Stalingrad founders earlier developed.
- The fourth activity lays the artistic and theoretical foundation of Stalingrad: **Yellow** Collecting, **Yellow** Productions and ‘Acting **Yellow**’.

Stalingrad, founded in 2009, operates as Stalingrad HW, Hybrid Workspace. Office, knowledgebase, production and presentation are shifted into one spatial concept. Until June 2012 we operated from Amsterdam NDSM, now we work @Vechtclub XL in Utrecht.

### **Yellow** pre–summary

**Yellow** is the Stalingrad artistic theory and instrument to escape the Neo–lib desert: creating an alternative for the de–bordering force citizens and consumers are subjected to and which changed the social, political and institutional.

**Yellow** strategizes a way–out (or in) where thinking, concepting and developing are practiced in a critical and diverging spatial narrative. The narrative is the synthesizing method. From this narrative other methods derive.

**Yellow** operates within the concept of the enclave. Our Yellow enclave concept has a permeable border and is an accessible area with a

subversive power. The enclave is the protecting and closed area and at the same time it is the opening space, the germcell.

**Yellow** is a set of lenses and filters to entangle knowledge, theory, personal and private notions, and launch artistic, social, organizational & institutional change.

**Yellow** is a piece of Art.

## ***Stalingrad concepts Yellow to:***

- 1 Free the color **Yellow** for Enclavic politics and use its Action DNA for Enclavic freedom practices.
- 2 Create a **Yellow** answer to the urgent need to create re-humanising concepts in a neo-lib desert.
- 3 Instruction: Develop an experimental practice for societal innovation, tools and techniques for intervention in other organizational bodies and a critical and inspiring environment for personal and group expression.

## **Resumé**

Free the color **Yellow** by appropriating it, install an artistic environment that is critical, innovative, global AND proximity-oriented. Be always aware of 'the appropriation of distinction' and the de-bordering effects this puts on the individual, on society, on its institutions and politics.

## ***Enclaves***

### *I am Stalingrad*

Stalingrad as a political/historical location, a city under pressure by its enemies that has been successful in breaking out. This breakout started the final phase of the Second World War.

Stalingrad is an artist/organization and based as the 'enclave'. This is expressed in the logo-sign of Stalingrad that depicts our first area in Amsterdam Noord. Stalingrad is a 'enclavic freedom practice'.

In the first sketches of Stalingrad we developed 'border-theories' and diagrams that shows the process of exteriorization of mental ideas and concepts of 'border practice' into physical and spatial

manifestations. The notions of and operations on the concept of enclave are the spatial version and physical expressions, where Yellow is the visual and poetic/political expression. Yellow is currently presented inside an enclave and enclaves are created when Yellow operates on other locations as organizations and institutions. In one of the artworks the Self is proposed as an enclave: I am Stalingrad. Psycho-politics is Border-politics.

## ***The Omni-Capitalistic Monstrum (OCM)***

*What to do to prevent our consciousness of the brain to coincide with the mind of capitalism? (Malabou 2011)*

The Omni-Capitalistic Monstrum (1996 csho/bongers) is the artistic equivalent of what others name Neo-liberalism.

### ***Personal experiences***

We, Bongers and van Staveren experienced the birth of OCM movement in the decline and breakdown of the welfare state in the 1980's. In later years we detected OCM, via the rise of consumerism (also present within the cultural margin as an extension of the market culture), then via the power of the image and image culture and the process of 'distinction' which turned all symbolic acts via the difference indicators of the market into commodities, we finally arrived in an omni-monstrum.

In the nineties we developed narratives in one Meta-narrative Case Study House Omega and acted as artists and curators within our own 'Association'. Through the lens of architecture, art and theory closely related to psychoanalysis and anthropology (based on a scene of Profession Reporter by Antonioni) we developed narratives that connect the Self and the Social. On the brink of the millennium our professional routes split up: we both sought for expert knowledge and experience in the social and within domains of conceiving and strategy. Now 10 years later and both skilled with expertise in these domains, we propose Yellow.

### ***OCM operations***

The OCM directs all phenomena and production to an individual ( I ) experience. This experience is over-amplified by image, moral and uniqueness. With this offer the OCM serves the need for distinction it

earlier created. This autogenesis is a typical mechanism in advanced ideologies. (Schwarz)

The I is constantly reorganising and reframing its reality, all input, in order to remain stable. Being an auto-hypnotic animal (Sloterdijk) and reconstructing itself out of his own impression, the input of this impression is essential.

The I (Self) is exploited for a re-projection of individual and personal needs by an internal projector. The I as projector and projector-space becomes available socially, politically, commercially and ideologically to suppliers to re-project their images or construct meaning via the Self. In this closed loop there is no systemic need for external mediation.

This re-projection is an unbalancing media mechanism that affects the relationship between the subject, society and along the way creates instability in society, their institutions and transactional and symbolic mechanisms. Because in the OCM not the relation between the I and the Social is empowered, but through the Ego-cinematic the I is artificially constructed and hedonistic-religious deconstructed, the illusion of self-control and self-perspective is settled. This constructing-deconstructing within a virtual Self is the Power Plant, through fusion and reaction, for producing momentum in the OCM.

The ego-cinematic forces people to be their own spectator and (with the perverse help of Social Networks) enlarge their Self to the outside world. This permanent stress of not being represented by the enlarged image, leads to a collectively experienced depression. (French psychoanalyst 2011...)

We use the color Yellow to show how this color mediates between the dominant forces and differentiators and the margin within this sphere and ends up with a spatial practice that is not subjected to the OCM.

**Yellow** is a non-utopian concept and **Yellow** is not a direct method to reach a goal. **Yellow** strategizes outside in and inside out. **Yellow** is the dynamic substance that connects an artistic theory, artwork and intervention techniques. And **Yellow** is also all these things apart.

## ***Absorption/Hunger***

The OCM is called a Monstrum because of its Monstrous Hunger. The hunger and its expanding nature are manifestations of the ecological mono-cultural conditions this Monstrum lives in. This Monstrum is getting bigger and more Omni, occupies every niche that tries to

escape from it, and eats everything in the system where 'difference' emerges.

Difference (intelligent acts or meta strategies) gets all the attention by Stalingrad HW and **Yellow** BECAUSE this potential is Monstrum food: 'Difference' is eaten up, absorbed, by OCM.

*Stalingrad has introduced **Yellow** in 2009 as an instrument for its own mission. (Mission, vision, strategy Stalingrad 2009). The mission is to empower citizens and consumers in search for directions to strategize (not occupy) the OCM. This strategizing should create a dimensional concept (Enclave) where artistic and human change production and thinking can occur. Because of the **Yellow**, the produced 'difference' **CANNOT** be absorbed by OCM. **Yellow** itself absorbs all **Yellow** so nothing else can absorb it. This non-absorption is conditional for further development inside the Enclave. 'Collecting all **Yellow** expressions' is a way to keep a strategic advantage on the OCM; by collecting we absorb **Yellow** OCM expressions.*

## ***The Margin is in the Middle***

*The (cultural) margin has installed itself in the middle. And during this journey has dragged all symbolic domains behind. Art, Architecture, Design and Interactive culture all came to the middle. Now the margin lacks matter, opportunity and urgency to operate marginally, its remains in the middle and everyone from all domains stands around it. Art Producers, Media, Visitors/consumers, Politics is warming itself around this fireplace. (From 'Border Stories, Stalingrad & Enclaves' 2012)*

For Stalingrad HW, using this margin as an start is not the easy-way-in or out; from a communication and marketing point of view it is much more effective to re-route along the regular dominant route of ideological critique. There is more then one reason for not choosing the 'easy' way and routing along the margin.

The margin is where the endplay takes place, where the interesting things linger in their ambiguity, where meaning is never direct and final. It is here that we want to operate eventually.

From a traditional communication point of view an extreme new routing, first coming from the hot and 'real' world of Studio Stalingrad and then de-routed into the opposite direction, is unclear, difficult to understand and creates noise that can evolve in unreliability.

Although we always have acted with the current ideological notions, backstage we are experienced enough to know that the **Yellow** challenge needs thorough movement and balancing within OCM tactics.

Over the years we at Stalingrad are trained as curators, theoreticians, methodologists, business-analysts and developers. We experienced, regrettably, that the 'Management of the Margin' went into the battle of distinction. By eating the difference as a result of this battle, OCM could enter the marginal domains of culture and art. And the Margin moved to the middle.

In 1998 we have collaborated with 'De Appel'; we developed a large-scale project named Boolean Fruit. In the process of making we made clear how cultural institutions could be organized and be part of a changing society as organizations producing and presenting symbols and actions. Our message was clear and direct: also the marginal will be part of the OCM principles. There is no way out. So strategize towards this development. Keep ahead: you're lost when you're a follower. And as a frontrunner it isn't easy to keep track too.

### ***Re-Route-to-Margin***

The approach Stalingrad has developed to execute **Yellow**, our re-route-to-Margin, our Field of expertise so to say, is indirect. Instinctively one understands that identifying the OCM directly and challenging it in its heart (difference) is a dangerous route with different unknown effects. The difference engine is strong and advanced in its mechanical variations and should not be underestimated; the entanglement of psycho-, socio- and topo-politics creates a field filled with mines and pitfalls. Stalingrad made their field of practice deliberately hybrid in order to control defensive routines. So we can detect cloakroom identity changes and shapeshifting phenomena within and between the domains (Psycho-Socio-Topo) that entail the OCM field.

An other route (also an indirect route) is not to explicitly express our mission (unlike this document) and act in full silence as an artist with a **yellow** agenda. This is how we worked the last ten years. This is no option anymore because without an indirect and inversed but public strategy **Yellow** will be swallowed/colonised/absorbed by OCM. **Yellow** needs the public realm as a powerful meta-absorbant and participatory regime.

We choose not to challenge/overpower the current dominant powers, the OCM, or juxtapose a political critique or pose an alternative narrative next to the current. We do not focus on what is the dominant force, to fight it, but we patiently analyze the Margin and its mechanisms first. Start where OCM has been active most recently: in the world of culture and art, in literature, philosophy, science.



### ***Start a save route***

By approaching the OCM from behind and start with those worlds that were swallowed last, our back is covered, there's nobody behind us so it is easy to enter the scene without being noticed. Without the risk of getting involved while Stalingrad is not 'protected' yet.

We want to get in contact with art institutions and alternative organizations that are non-hostile to exercise and explore **Yellow**. Their network and expertise in their field is needed to create a platform for **Yellow**. From there we want to meet everyone who became active part, ambassador or instrument of the OCM recently and who is aware of this situation by the **Yellow** practice we executed before. From there we Re-route to the Margin.

### **Enter the scene**

Start the MSI: the Monstrum Scene Investigation. Analyze the scene where the Monstrum was active most recently, look at your fish and follow its traces. Always read and listen around. And act **Yellow** on this scene by working on different cases simultaneously, so no tunnel visioning can occur.

### ***Yellow, the color***

**Yellow, the color** has long been used exclusively for consumer activation within commerce. Culturally the color yellow is not claimed in western society by dominant socio-emotional, political or spiritual domains. Activation, Action and Signal-alert are the dominant utilitarian connotations of **Yellow**. Stalingrad chooses Yellow in 2009 as the color of Consumerism; **Yellow** was not yet appropriated by or attributed to a Love Brand or any dominant ideology. In this respect the color **Yellow** and the Enclave are *Doppelgänger*. Both free.

**Yellow** made a transfer from a sales driven and single-issue color into a complex vehicle with a variable set of (ambiguous) instructions. **Yellow** now covers exclusiveness and 'generic garbage'. The omnipresence of **Yellow** in cultural settings demon-strate (in a attempt to de-monstrate) how OCM absorbs all meaning and prevents to create safe non-occupied niches.

In 2011 and 2012 the OCM demonstrates its catastrophic effects all over Europe and beyond. The application of **Yellow** has changed in those same years: **The Yellow Years**.

**Yellow** became mainstream: first in communication, branding and fashion, so first in commercial settings, later **Yellow** was recognized by designers as 'non-occupied' and subsequently was used everywhere. **Yellow** is now common within branding and attention seeking in cultural organizations and art institutions. (Compare 'The Margin is in the Middle', 2011–12 Stalingrad/Bongers).

The use of **Yellow** fits within the tacit of most cultural organizations, as 'marginal organizations': they all using marketing and communication techniques similar to business (Dercon 2012). By executing the same in- and excluding techniques of thoughts and people, the margin should be re-aligned in order to organize a front against dominant and forceful ideology. Stalingrad demonstrate by '**Yellow**' you can enter and leave freely all societal domains without being infected by the dominant mindset of Omni-Capitalism Monstrum.

## ***Knowledge Domains and Methodology***

Strategizing the OCM is an artistic game. It uses knowledge and insights from the areas of Architecture, Philosophical Anthropology, Communication Theory, Business and Marketing, Information Theory, History, Political Philosophy, Political Theory, Economy and Globalization Studies (Social) Psychology, Sociology, Media Theory, Art and Art Theory, general Philosophy and Theology.

**Yellow** (as layed-out in the artwork "The Margin is in the Middle") is an artistic theory that offers an interdisciplinary synthesis and generates insights far beyond the juxtaposition of non-integrated areas and domains with some kind of overlap. This synthesis opens up new visions and practices.

## ***Acting Yellow***

In the artistic practice of Stalingrad the presence of the **Yellow** color and its meanings as earlier described are being merged. **Yellow** is a 'marker-color' to identify 'consumer activation' and **Yellow** is no longer innocent; the working area has broadened from commerce to culture. Working **Yellow** is the term used for a new form of activism

where 'strategizing' replaces 'occupying' and 'physical demonstrating'. **Yellow** is a kind of 'Interactivism'.

We propose to de-monstrate the OCM by Acting **Yellow** and interfere with all its domains that are mostly active at the same time. Business, Marketing, Communication, Design are combined with political theory, (social) psychology, sociology, philosophy and media theory in 'the same gaze'.

This Acting **Yellow** (Interactivism) creates openness and opportunity for the margin. For everyone. When citizens and consumers are trained in Acting **Yellow** an innovative force against OCM is set-up

## ***Collecting Yellow***

'Collecting **Yellow**' is a political experiment: creating a collection nowadays is an ambiguous act. Adding symbolic stuff to other stuff to prove its existence is

By collecting **Yellow** stuff and expressions, OCM is not able to occupy the **Yellow** Enclave. Although there's a possibility that OCM can be marked/ identified by the color **Yellow** – **Yellow** as a marker color for OCM – collecting **Yellow** and focusing on this phenomena (Acting **Yellow**) keeps us ahead of and alert to changes in the OCM in general.

Along the way Stalingrad produces **Yellow** artwork, narratives and installations. As long as Stalingrad collects and produces **Yellow** actively, doing research on the situations, meanings and use of **Yellow** and 'appropriates all other **Yellow** production', Stalingrad is a vivid enclave for societal and artistic change. The concept of the 'first starter' (business concept) works here as well; with maybe more impact for the strategic advantage it also covers symbols and meaning.

## ***Stalingrad as a dimensional experiment***

Stalingrad, Stalingrad HW, Peppereer.com and **Yellow** are part of a synthesizing narrative that is developed over the changing nature of 'classic' dimensions and their relations:

- 1 Place/Location/Space,
- 2 Time and Durée,
- 3 Information
- 4 Social interaction.

(STIP Model, Vienna 2007, csho #13)

Major changes in the first two dimensions are benchmarks for large scale ideological, social and technological changes and innovations that affect every inch of human life on a global scale, the latter combines psycho-analysis, antropology and the shift in roles and systems behaviour in the interaction and meaning between I and the Social.

## ***Notes and references***

All notes and references to authors in this document will be added in later versions.

(Mc Luhan 2003). (Ghemawat 2011), (Bauman 2001, 2004, 2007), (Schumpeter 1953), (Sloterdijk 2003, 2006, 2009, 2011) (Gleick 2010), (Bolter/Grusin 2000), (Zizek 2009), (Szeemann 2006), (Foucault 2011), (Deleuze 2011), (Verhaeghe 2012), Kunneman (2012).

## **About People**

Bongers and Van Staveren direct Stalingrad HW. Bongers as Creative director and van Staveren is Change Director. Many others are advising, concepting and designing.

Bongers is a border practioner. He examines how he himself as a microdot is related to the social and how to transfer roles and domains. He creates spatial narratives. Most people see only small pieces, he organizes his professional life so nobody ever can experience his whole story. Titles of artworks, brand names or organizations, basic theoretical structures and insights are doubled and crossed between completely different professional domains. The meta-story was never executed as an entity. Stalingrad HW is this vehicle.

Arienne finishes her study Sociology, finishes working for Stroom as program director Art in Public Space, and starts her Phd on collaboration and change @ Sioo, an interuniversity institute for chance and learning. Arienne is a renowned specialist and writer on Collaboration in complexity, in 'Action Research', Change and intervention. Arienne van Staveren left Sioo in 2012 and becomes director/chairman of LESI, National Research-organization for Social Intervention with its own Science Master program.

Bongers starts Stalingrad in 2009 as a commercial studio. On July 1, 2012 Bongers and van Staveren start Stalingrad HW. The time is ripe to introduce their artwork and artistic vision and experience into the

open. The borders between the I and the social, between amateur and professional are now fully synthesized and the **Yellow** set is operational.

## ***Professional biography***

For a CV of Arienne van Staveren visit her on LinkedIn:

<http://www.linkedin.com/pub/arienne-van-staveren/7/a5/387>

For Johannes Bongers' professional biography visit:

<http://www.stalingrad.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/johannes-pb.pdf>

## **Stalingrad HW Expressions/Activities**

### **Stalingrad **Yellow** Collection**

- Physical Items
  - The **Yellow** classification
  - The physical object
    - Txt description
      - Title (ia)
      - Description
      - Amount (preferable min. 2)
      - Data of Purchase
      - Where is the item found/purchased
      - Who purchased the item
      - Country of Production
      - Date of photograph
      - Name photographer
- Special Collection: appropriated brands/items
  - Physical **Yellow** item with brandlabel
  - Added: Brandmark Stalingrad on the item
    - Extra brandspace for Stalingrad H=message
- Digital Objects Stored
  - Screenshots > Large screen production
  - Digital Photo's (Raw + jpeg)
  - Digital Vector (working) files (ai, eps, pdf, svg)
  - Articles (.doc, .pdf)
- Digital objects published
  - Tumblr **Yellow** World
  - Flickr Stalingrad Channel
  - Stalingrad Website/blog
  - Pinterest **Yellow** World

## Initiatives Stalingrad HW

- Artist
- Peppeer.com, Your Next Self
  - Social Discovery Platform

## Products/concept

- Ligetti.com/Stalingrad HW
  - **Yellow** Products
    - Sculpture
    - Lamp
    - Table

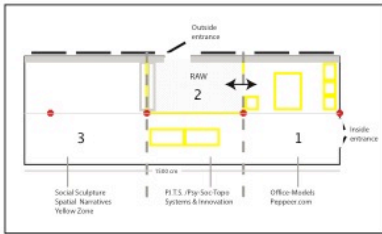
## Stalingrad Consultancy

- Concepting
- Brand Management
- Live consult and social landscaping

First Sketch

First draft of **Yellow I** and the Globe

DARGILATS



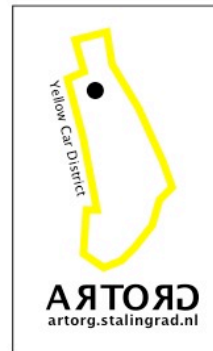
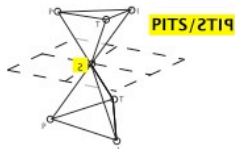
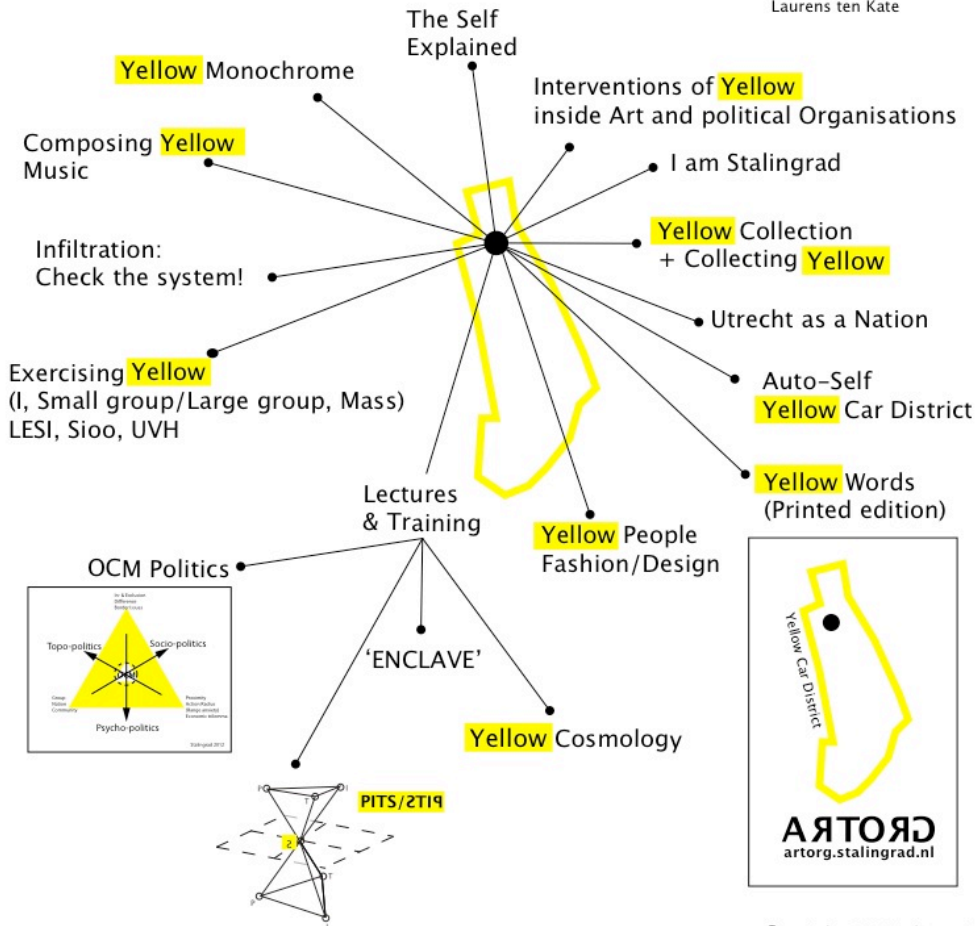
- + Publications:
  - Tumbr Yellow World
  - Stalingrad.nl Updated
  - Yellow Theory
  - Border Works

**Yellow I** and the Globe  
(i group nation >  
group nation globe)

About the Triumvirate and the Self

Concept and Art Direction  
Stalingrad HW

Participants a.o.  
Rene ten Bos  
Van Abbe/Charles Esche  
Rene Daniels?  
LESI, Sioo, UVH  
Luc Hoebeke  
Laurens ten Kate



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