

Monique Besten (The Netherlands, 1972) is a nomadic artist, writer, historian and educator who was born in the Netherlands and is at home where her feet are. She likes to be in the here and now by creating poetic bridges between the past and the future, the real and the virtual world, analogue and digital ways of working. She works site-specific using different media, often building large scale installations inspired by specific places, their history and customs, as well as their human and non-human inhabitants. She researches walking as an artistic medium by making (long distance) performative walks, crossing countries on foot in a three-piece business suit (A Soft Armour), collecting stories and researching life. Themes in her work are slowness, ecology and attentiveness. She studied medieval history in the Netherlands and Ireland, Free Media at the Rietveld Art Academy in the Netherlands and Art in Public Space and New Artistic Strategies at the Bauhaus University in Germany.

Her work has been exhibited around the world and the last 5 years she has been teaching Performance Art and Artistic Survival Skills at the HKU University of the Arts in the Netherlands. She writes for & collaborates with the Dark Mountain Project and published the book "The Wanderer. A Traveller born out of Words" (Dpr Barcelona). Her performative walks brought her from Amsterdam to the South of France, she walked from Amsterdam to Vienna, from Barcelona to the COP 21 in Paris and both virtually and in real through Catalunya. Political, social and ecological matters are always at the heart of her performative walks and site specific installations. She gives workshops and lectures about slow ways of being and she has a keen interest in Natural Farming and the philosophies of Masanobu Fukuoka. She is the winner of the Marsato Award 2023 for exceptional walking projects.

Education:

Ceramic courses, El Torn & TMDC Barcelona (ES)	2023
New Creative Technologies in Education, HKU Utrecht (teachers academy)	2021-22
Permaculture & Natural Farming Courses (ES)	2014-17
Media Art and Design, MFA Bauhaus Universität, Weimar (DE)	2012-13
Public Art and New Artistic Strategies, MFA Bauhaus Universität, Weimar (DE)	2011-12
Free Media (BA), Gerrit Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam (The Netherlands)	1999-03
Photography, AVS Utrecht (the Netherlands)	1995-96
History (MA), University of Utrecht/Cork (The Netherlands/Ireland)	1990-96

Residencies (including presentations/exhibitions):

* O Castro Art Village (ES), large scale installation in an abandoned village	2024
* Schmiede (Austria), residency about collaboration between artists and scobys (symbiotic cultures of bacteria and yeast), workshops & installation	2024
* Verpejos (The Spinners) Creative Pastures, working with sheep to rethink the relationship between humans and nature, 1 month, Lithuania	2022
* Becoming Earthly, experimental learning space for artists/art practitioners focusing on environmental awareness, 3 months online, The Barn, Scotland	2022
* CACiS Center for Art & Sustainability, 1 month (ES)	2019
* Classroom Alive Bootcamp, 1 week (ES)	2018
* Fire & Shadow, Dark Mountain Project & Ways of Nature (UK/RO & online) 10 months	2017
* The Grand Tour, online walk & real performative walk, Nau Còclea (ES) 2 x 1 month	2017
* Refugio, secret location in the woods (NL) 1 week	2016
* Open Lab Halland & Calling for Peace Varberg (SE) 3 weeks	2015
* WTA Gallery, project for Arrels (organisation for homeless), Barcelona (ES) 4 months	2015
* Schmiede, meeting/developing/connecting with 200 experts, Hallein (AT) 10 days	2014/15
* Binaural/Nodar, sound & walking residency, several mountain villages (PT) 6 weeks	2013
* ARNA, Walking Peace, walking pilgrim trails & making slow art (SE) 5 weeks	2013
* Sideways, Belgium, 4 week walking festival from the west to the east of Belgium	2012
* Space Programme, Performance Corporation, Celbridge (IRL) - 3 weeks	2011
* Basement Project Space / ArtTrail Festival, Cork (IRL) - 1 month	2009
* Art Centre Messen, Ålvik (NO) - 1 month	2008

* KiK (Art in Kolderveen), Kolderveen (NL) - 3 months	2008
* Elsewhere Living Museum, Exercises in being here, North Carolina (USA) - 2 months	2007
* European Artists, Hällefors (Sweden) - 2 months	2006
* Bridge Guard Residential Art/Science Residency, Sturovo (SK) - 6 months	2005

Exhibitions/projects (selection):

* Walking the Questions, 1 year project in different countries (2021-22), culminating in a long performative walk (2023)	2021-23
* Home, installation with seed bombs, countryside the Netherlands	2020
* Disconnected, Loop: Festival of Moving Image, Barcelona, ES	2018
* Woman's Work, AirSpace Gallery & Pottery Museum Stoke-on-Trent, UK	2016
* Travel Fever, Frans Hals Museum & de Hallen Haarlem NL	2016
* A Soft Armour 6, performative 2 month walk Barcelona - COP21 Paris	2015
* Nomadic Village 2015, research project about new ways of Nomadism, SI/HR	2015
* Directing & performing opera "The woman without baggage", NL	2015
* Nomadic Village 2014, 96 day performative walk & installation, DE & AU	2014
* Nomadic Village 2013, Memory Shop, performance/installation, Cuges les Pins (FR)	2013
* A Soft Armour #4, 40 day walk from Amsterdam to France	2013
* "Brein", community art project with Korsakoff patients, travelling expo (NL & BE)	2013-14
* "A soft armour", performance, several locations/countries	2012-15
* "Plastic crusader", performance about plastic waste, on site & Metaalkathedraal (NL)	2012
* "Memory pocket", performance/installation, kiosk.6, Weimar (DL)	2012
* "What's to be done?", work in progress Sarajevo, Bosnia	2012
* Moving and Landing, intervention & installation in all towns in the district of Hellendoorn, final exhibition in the City Hall in Nijverdal, (NL)	2011-14
* "See you when the plums are ripe!", ongoing work in process project, Spijk (NL)	2010
* Group exhibition "Dhammapada Revisited", Strathcona Press Gallery, Ladysmith (CND)	2010
* Production and presentation of 20 short videos for the improvisation collective "Rosie Wooff" (music, dance & visuals), monthly presentation, Amsterdam (NL)	2009-10
* "Tussenland", improving neighbourhoods by transforming empty shops, A'dam (NL)	2009
* "Relocating discovery", Basement Project Space, Cork (IRL)	2009
* "In the land of....", connecting Amerika & the Dutch countryside, KIK, Kolderveen (NL)	2008
* "View", a performance about slowness & perception, Skybox, Marci Panis/A'dam (NL)	2008
* "Work in progress", Art Centre Messen, Ålvik (NO)	2008
* "Now Here", At Home Gallery", installation about the impact of history, Samorin (SK)	2007

Grants/scholarships:

* Marsato Award for exceptional walking projects	2023
* Rewilding Cultures Mobility Grant	2023
* Writing Grant Future Architecture Platform	2020
* Stipend Grand Tour, Nau Coclea, Catalunya (ES)	2017
* Three successful crowdfunding campaigns for A Soft Armour 4 & 5 & 6	2013-15
* Travel Grant for walking workshop Air Space Gallery, UK	2014
* Dizel Grant for Nomadic Village 2013	2013
* Stipend for Space Programme, Performance Corporation, Ireland	2011
* Stipend by the KiK Foundation (Art in Kolderveen) to support a residency period	2008
* Stipend to invest in artistic career by the Netherlands Foundation for Visual Arts, Design and Architecture (Fonds BKVB)	2006-07
* Stefan and Viera Frühauf Fund (Switzerland), for residency in Sturovo, Slovakia	2005
* Donations by Amsterdam Foundation for the Arts, Prins Bernhard Foundation for Culture and VSB Foundation for New Riddles and Constellations	2003-08

Teaching/workshops/lectures:

HKU University of the Arts Utrecht (NL), Estudio Nomada Art (ES), University of Oregon, Classroom Alive Bootcamp (ES), Artez Academy of Art & Design, Pottery Museum & Art Gallery Stoke-on-Trent (UK), Dark Mountain Basecamp, Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Future Architecture Platform Ljubljana, Pilgrim Centre Lund (SE), Aroundless (CZ), Södra Teatern Kegelbanan Stockholm (SE), The Foundry (ES)

Languages:

Dutch, English, German, Spanish, French