leaving the public, 2010

A gathering of people observing a crown princess falling asleep after she is administered a sleeping pill. As Her Royal Highness relinquishes her public duties, she departs from the royal architecture of her image while an audience watchfully awaits in silence.



Denicolai & Provoost
Artesiëstraat 52
1000 Brussels

H.R.H Princess Mathilde
Paleizenplein 1
1000 Brussels

Nieuwpoort, 21 September 2010

Your Royal Highness Princess Mathilde of Belgium,

Let us not beat around the bush, or rather mill around the palace gates: we wish to make Your Royal Highness a proposal. Neither your advisors nor your royal household will feel inclined to encourage you to accept a somewhat unconventional proposal, bearing in mind the unapproachable nature of your position as Royal Highness, as crown princess, as future Queen of this country. For that is simply the fact of the matter. *Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.* Even so, for us and for our project, it is of vital importance that we first inform Your Royal Highness. First the princess, then the rest of the country.
Indeed, just the knowledge that Your Royal Highness has read the following sentences would already amply suffice. To know that these assume a form, however short-lived, that they are interpreted, are briefly allowed to nestle in the pleats and folds of your Royal imagination... that in itself is more than adequate.

But before we unveil our proposal, we wish to eliminate any possible causes for misunderstanding. As artists we frequently make proposals that at first glance appear misplaced or unacceptable. As such, we oblige ourselves to leave the door ajar at all times: we must always allow the imagined a chance to become reality, against all expectations. Hence this well-intentioned request.
If we receive no response, we will fully understand. The utter elation we would feel were we to find a reply in our letterbox goes without saying.
Should Your Royal Highness, despite all the practical and reasonable objections, feel personally inclined to consider the proposal outlined below, then we would eagerly implore you: please do not hesitate, do it! Write to us, call us, suggest a place – a date and a time – to discuss that which is described below, and together let us make it a reality. Voila, with that said, let us proceed!

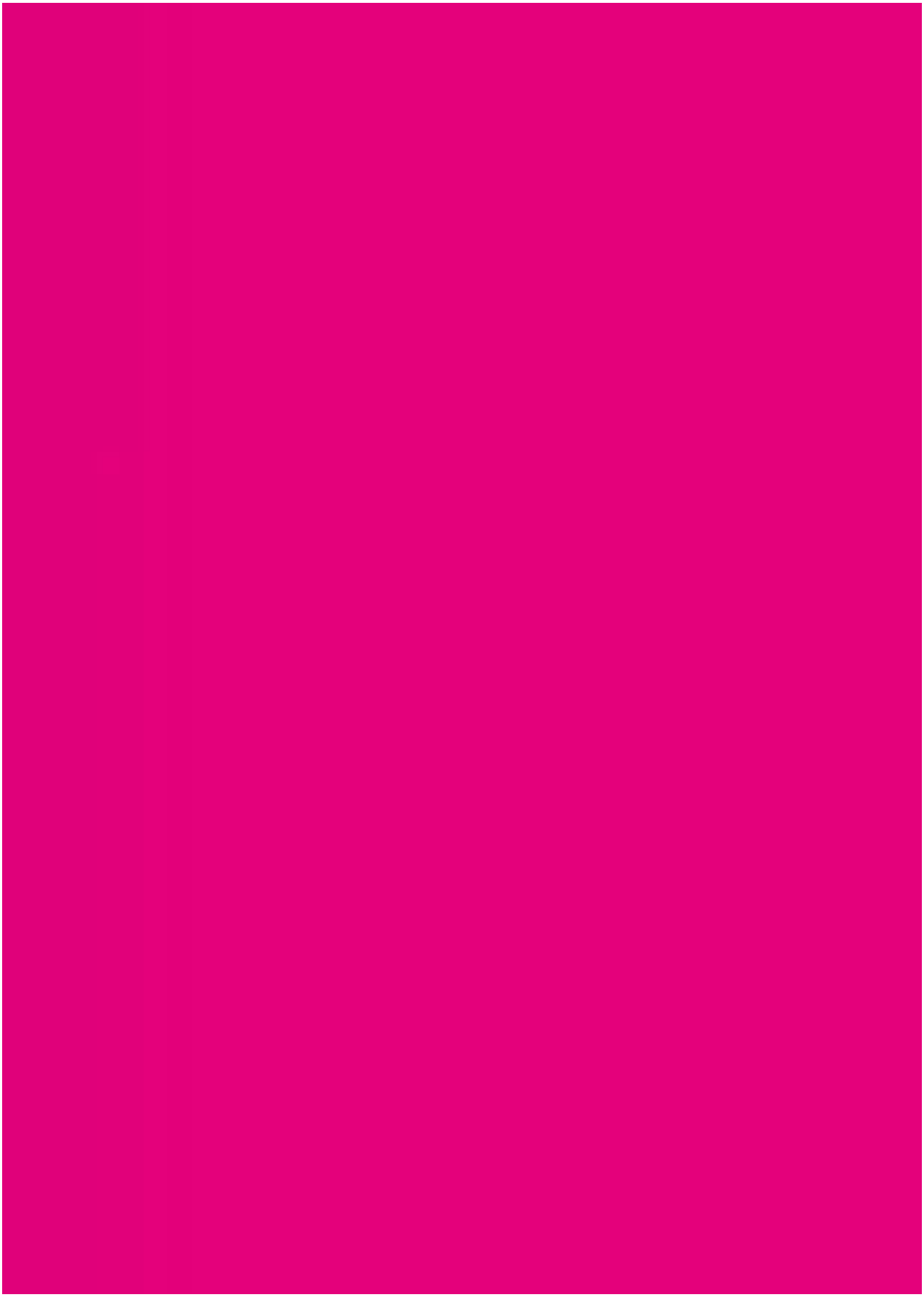
Your Royal Highness, hereafter follows our ideal scenario for a performance entitled 'Leaving the Public' in which you play the leading role.

Your Royal Highness is administered a sleeping pill and proceeds to lie on a bed in a sober room. Prior to this, ten people have gathered and are seated around the bed. Your Royal Highness is not announced by name, whereby the public remains in a state of uncertainty. Nothing is said. In silence the observers patiently wait until Your Royal Highness falls asleep. By falling asleep, Your Royal Highness relinquishes her public duties. In front of an audience, you depart the (royal) architecture of your image, you leave the public space created by the presence of an audience. Each observer decides individually when that time has come, to then likewise leave the space through a back door. The sleeping body of Your Highness is a shell to protect an intimacy with which the public has no business. The sleeping pill is an artistic instrument: like the painter's brush, it creates a much-needed distance between the representation and the observer. It serves as a night watch, as a bodyguard.

Your Royal Highness, please accept our expression of profound esteem,

Simona Denicolai & Ivo Provoost

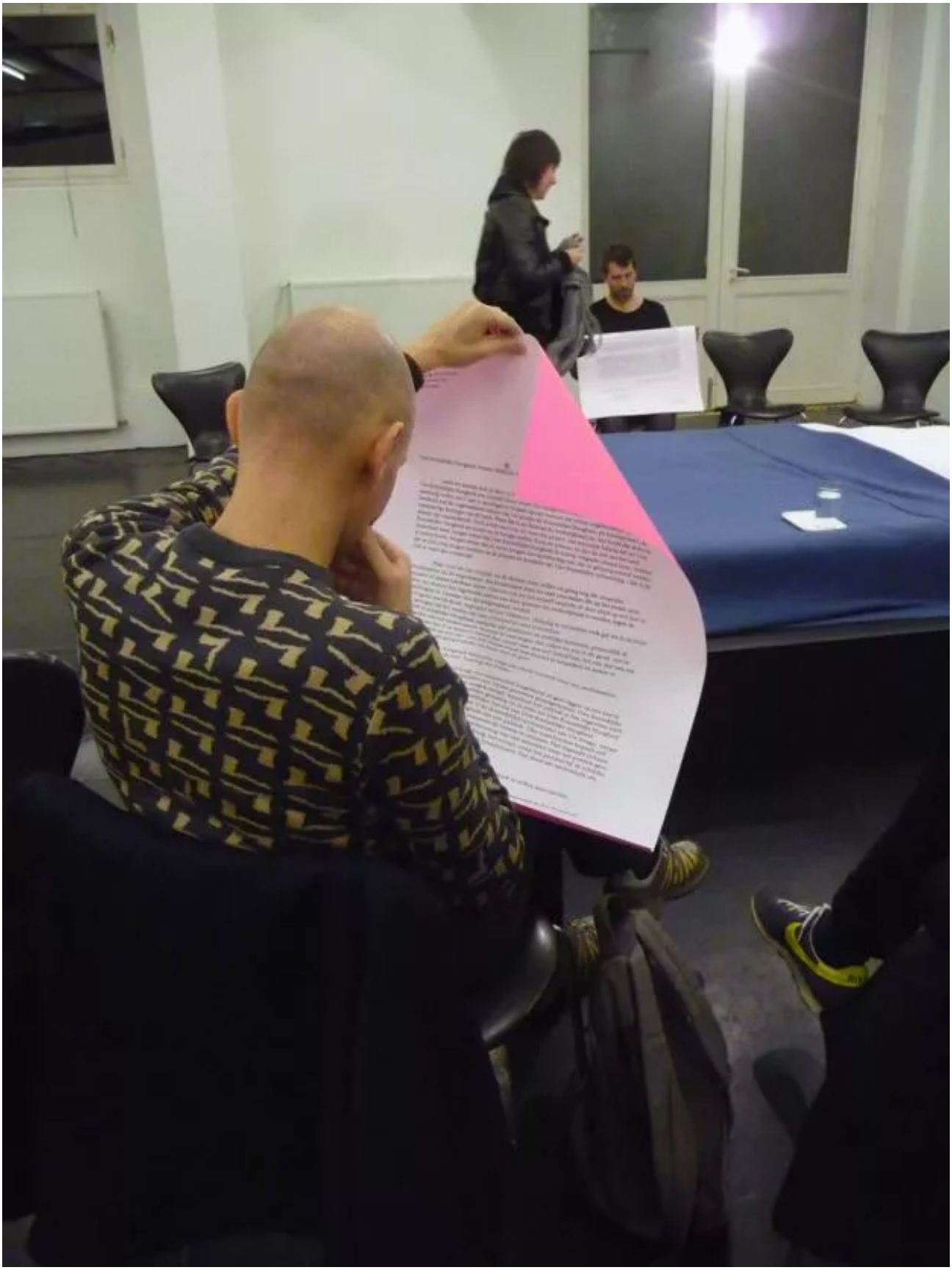
Letter to Princess Mathilde of Belgium. Free poster edition on 1000 exemplars.



Back of the letter. Free poster edition on 1000 exemplars.



Ad image for Leaving The Public.



Installation during Playground Festival 2010, curated by Eva Wittocx.



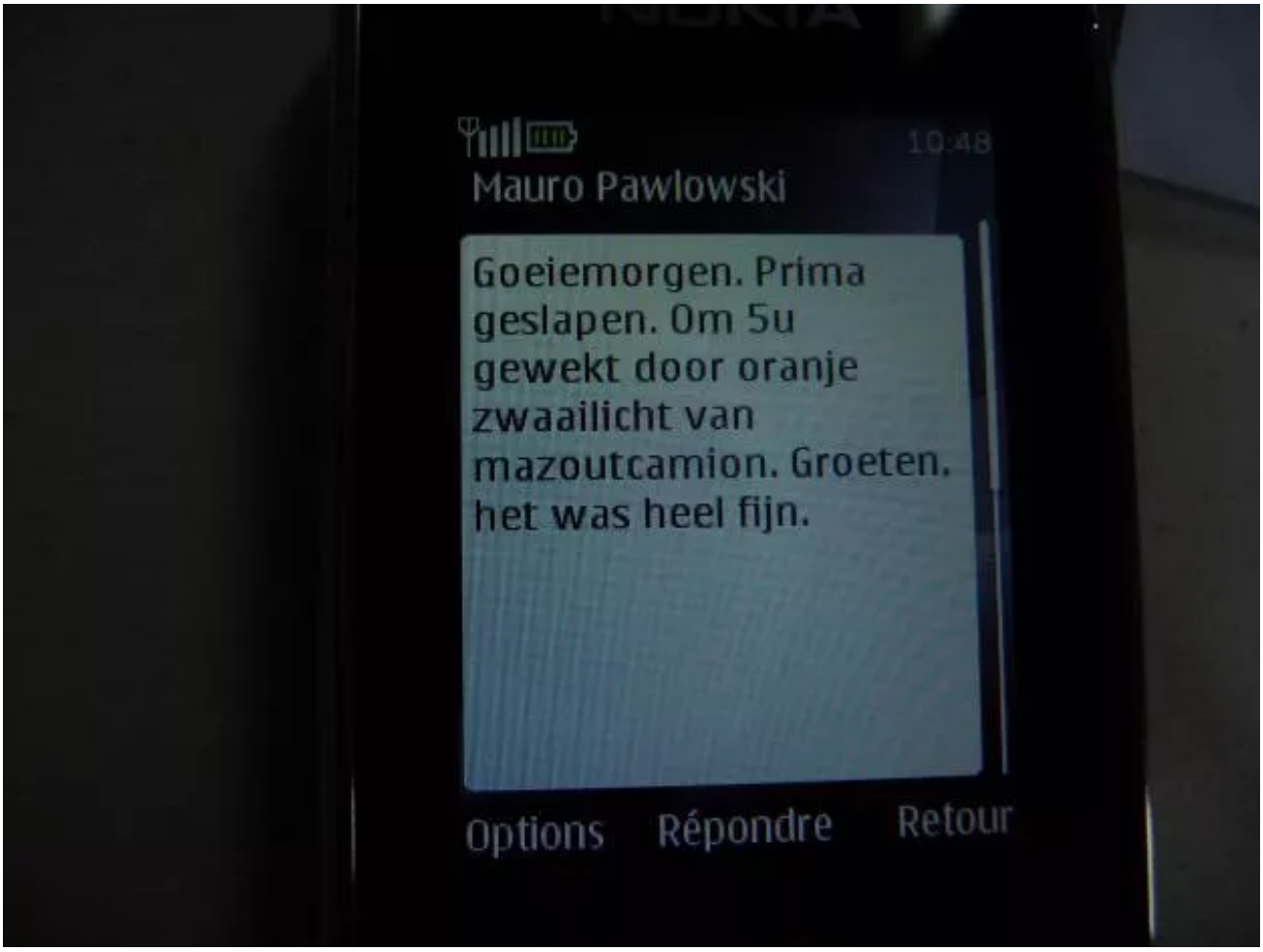
Performance with replacement/taster for the princess. 4/11/2010 Playground festival, curated by Eva Wittocx.



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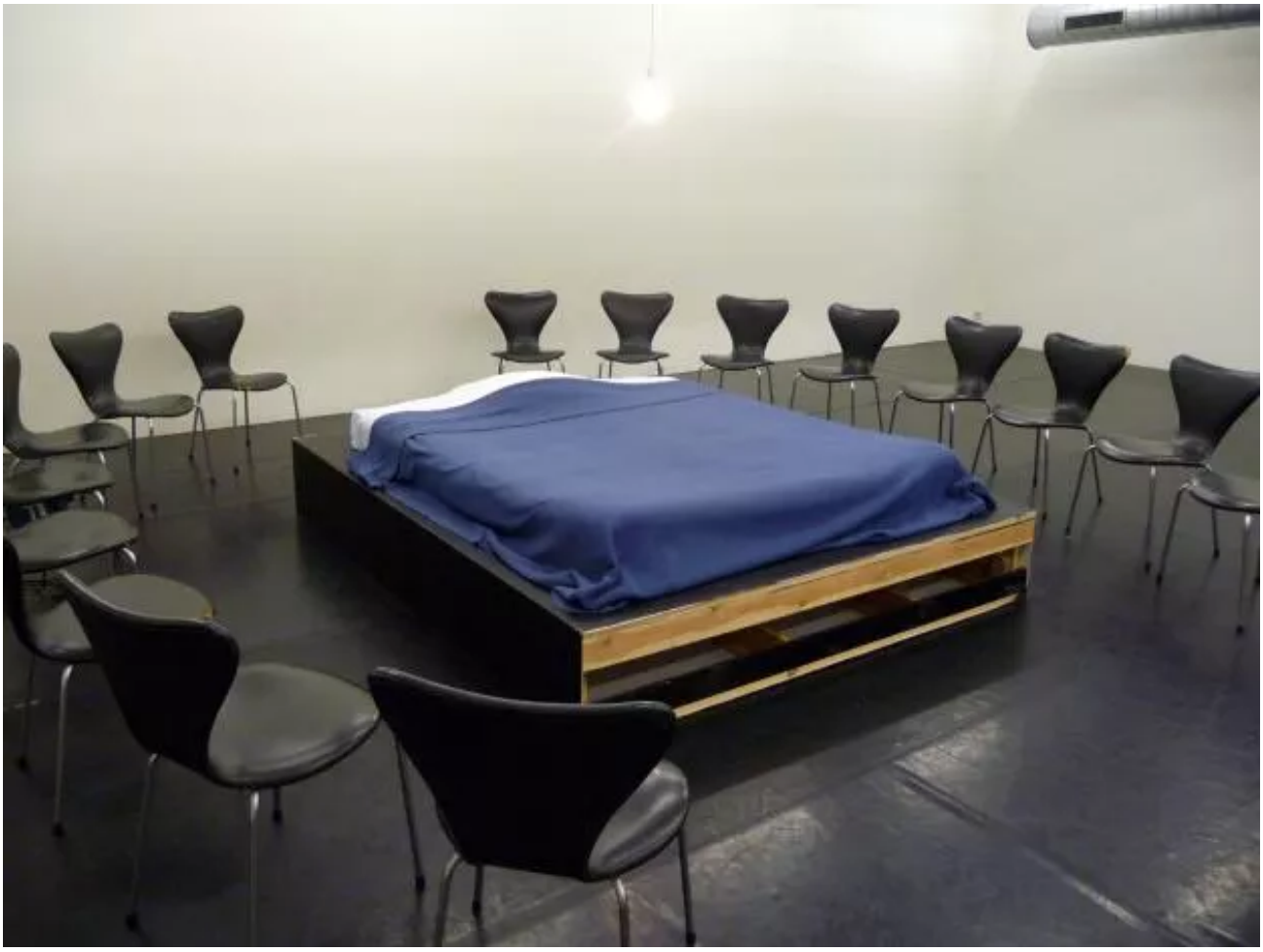
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