

Dear people of OISTAT,

Although I had initially heard of OISTAT by being a member of the Dutch OISTAT center 'VPT', it materialized for me when I became a board member of VPT in 2002. Intrigued by the amazing network, I joined the Technology Commission in 2004 as the Dutch voting representative. I discovered that the best way of getting acquainted with OISTAT and all it stands for, is to actually participate. It became clear to me that the essence of OISTAT lies in its members and their drive to share knowledge and learn from it. Meetings, as well as all kinds of events, both big and small, are the hubs to connect and broaden the network. My membership of the Technology Commission took me to all kinds of places, and gave me the opportunity to participate in and actively contribute to all kinds of projects.

Being an educated sculptor, who by a toss of fate found himself in theatre, I have been working on stage – back stage that is – on sets, scenery and special effects. For years, I worked hands-on, first as carpenter, painter, modeler and welder, and eventually I specialized as a scenic artist, painting the backdrops in the traditional way. Gradually, my small workshop expanded to a company that later expanded to a bigger company, now a well-known scenery workshop in the Netherlands. Though still in charge of artistic policy, governing and management, I handed over the daily business to my brother, as I switched careers to governance of a theatre, because I was asked to become the COO of one of the best theatres in the Netherlands: the Rotterdamse Schouwburg.

A fascinating new aspect of working in theatre revealed itself. My governing and managerial skills were tested while running an important theatre with over 500 performances each year, both as a receiving as well as a producing house. Parallel to that, the Dutch OISTAT center nominated me as candidate for the EC, for which I was elected in 2009. Having served two EC terms now, I'm very well informed on what's going on in the organization. Headquarters has matured during the last years, and is doing very well now. The cooperation with EC and GB has improved, and they in their turn are working to be future-proof. A lot has been achieved, and a lot has to be done still. Inspiration and energy are needed to keep OISTAT on track, in a time when everybody nowadays is busy, and organizations like ours are evolving with new ways of communication and member involvement. With the new elections coming up, some of the persons who have long been involved in governing OISTAT are stepping down. That's a great opportunity for new EC members to contribute fresh energy and ideas. At the same time, it is important to keep an eye on the perspective of things. I would like to take that position. It requires an understanding of the broader context, as well as a track record of steady EC membership and governing. It takes an open mind and an open eye; for people, for opportunities, for structure.

I am confident that I can provide that. I'm looking forward to being OISTAT's new President.

Bert Determann