

You are kindly invited to the public defense to obtain the degree of

## DOCTOR OF ADULT EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

of Ms. Aline Verbeke

Which will take place on Friday, November 22, 2024 at 5 pm (CET)  
Auditorium I.0.02, [building I](#) – [VUB Main Campus Brussels](#)  
Pleinlaan 2 – 1050 Brussel

Or if you wish to attend online, click here to [join the meeting](#)

## CRIPPING DIALOGUES: EXAMINING ARTS PARTICIPATION THROUGH A DISABILITY LENS

### JURY

#### INTERN:

**Prof. Dr. An-Sofie Smetcoren (Chair)**  
(Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

**Prof. Dr. Geert Vandermeersche**  
(Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

**Prof. Dr. Pieter Meurs**  
(Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

#### EXTERN:

**Prof. Dr. Claire Penketh**  
(Liverpool Hope University)

**Dr. Hari Prasad Sacré**  
(Universiteit Gent)

### SUPERVISOR

**Prof. Dr. Free De Backer**  
(Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

How to reach the VUB? Click [here](#) for guidelines.

Coming by car? Please [register your licence plate](#) in advance to have access to the campus.

You are also invited to the reception afterwards.

Please confirm your attendance before November 17 via by filling out this [form](#).

## SUMMARY

'Crippling Dialogues: Examining Arts Participation Through a Disability Lens' critically analyses the limited arts participation of people with disabilities within the Belgian arts sector, both as artists and audiences. This doctoral research, which includes various participant groups such as artists, support workers, and people with learning disabilities, employs a diverse range of qualitative research methodologies to examine – or 'crip' – the role of non-disabled arts practices through a disability lens. Through this approach, the dissertation arrives at three main conclusions. First, while disability is often embraced by non-disabled arts practitioners as an aesthetic value, this appreciation can undermine the actual inclusion of people with disabilities, particularly if the perspectives of disabled audiences remain unaddressed. Second, non-disabled practitioners often hold persistent assumptions about the arts participation of people with learning disabilities. These assumptions are shaped by perceptions of what constitutes 'real' – and often inaccessible – art. Finally, the findings call for a rethinking of conventional approaches to text and traditional perspectives on communication. This shift could both enhance the arts participation of individuals with (learning) disabilities and foster innovation within artistic practices.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Aline Verbeke obtained her Master's degree in Adult Educational Sciences from Vrije Universiteit Brussel in 2020. While developing her master's thesis, she first encountered the topic of disability in a theoretical way, initiating a four-year PhD journey driven by both societal and personal motivations. Both in and beyond her research, Aline loves exploring text in various forms. She published a scientific paper in *The Journal of Research in Drama Education and Applied Theatre* and in *Critical Arts*. Additionally, she wrote two research-based essays for *Rekto:Verso* and *Vooy*. Aline has also had the opportunity – albeit quite nervously – to present her work at several international conferences. Alongside her academic work, she frequently writes and performs poetry and music on stage.