

The image shows a minimalist art installation. A large, hand-painted white oval is centered on a light grey wall. Two vertical yellow bars are positioned on either side of the oval. On the floor, which is a dark grey concrete, there are yellow lines forming a rectangular frame. The text "LAUGHTER BANK" is printed in bold, black, sans-serif capital letters in the center of the white oval.

LAUGHTER BANK

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Ben Van den Berghe

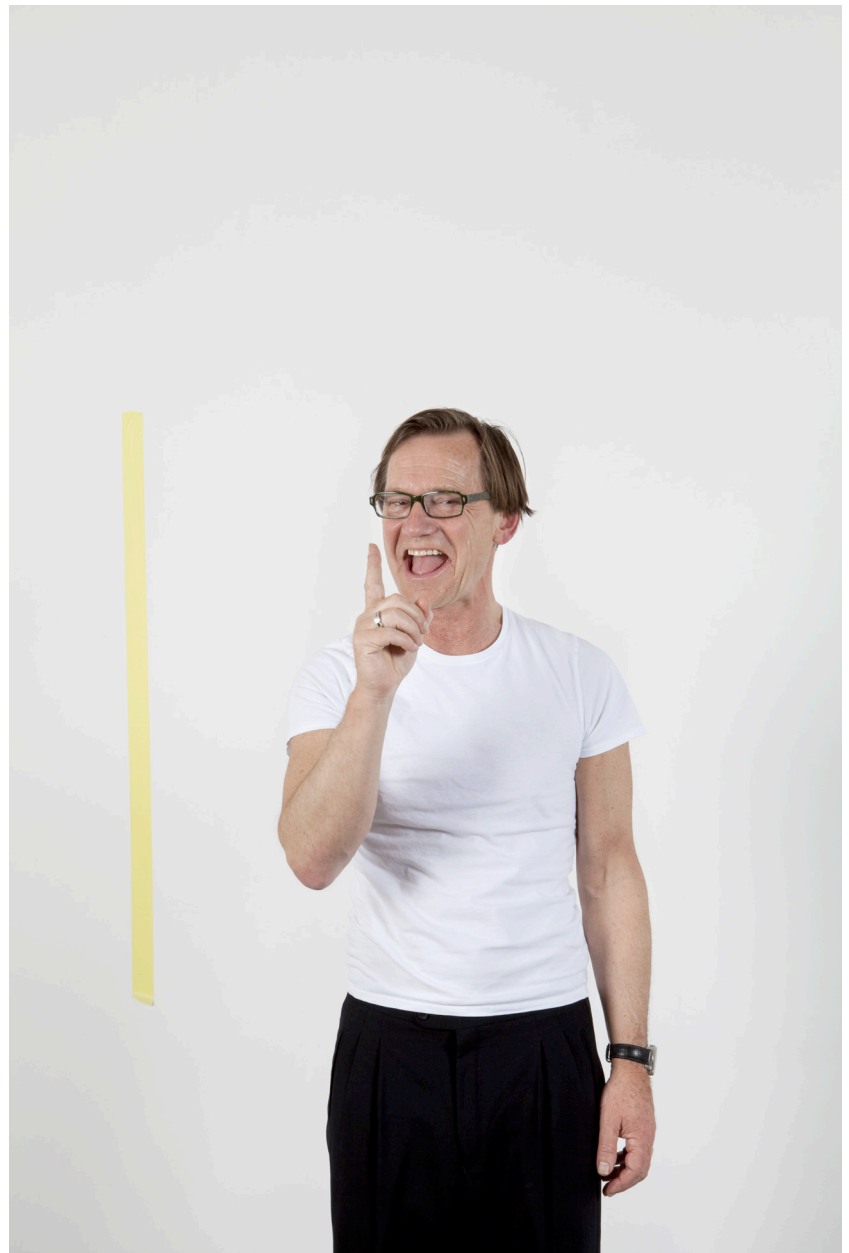
VISA BILL LAUGHTER*

Clinical research has shown that it is less likely to succumb to stress, depression and helplessness, when one is able to laugh away one's troubles. In a time in which we – more and more – need artificial triggers for feelings that once were supposed to come natural, ©*Laughter Yoga* was invented in 1995 by the Indian physician Dr. Madan Kataria as a *natural* artificial trigger of laughter. Thus combining the results of his clinical researches that laughter is healthy and that our body cannot distinguish artificial from genuine laughter. Therefore both forms generate the same physical and psychological benefits. Based on the idea that anyone can 'Laugh for No Reason', without relying on humor, jokes or comedy ©*Laughter Yoga* tries to provoke laughter in groups using eye contact and childlike playfulness. These artificially provoked laughs often seem to turn into real and contagious laughter. Today, ©*Laughter Yoga* has become a worldwide phenomenon with more than 6000 Social Laughter Clubs in about 60 countries.

©*Laughter Yoga* is considered as a method of dissipating negative feelings of anger and frustration and generating a more positive attitude. The kind of tragicomic idea that one can fool one's body and mind for a positive purpose, could in a way be seen as a revelation in terms of personal freedom: by emotionally freeing oneself from daily problems and stress, people can '*feel*' happier by just laughing – real or fake.

At the location of *de Nederlandsche Bank*, the financial center of the Netherlands, *Visa Bill Laughter* delivers its own answer to times of economic crisis...

*The title of the exhibition *Visa Bill Laughter* refers to one of many laughter exercises used in Laughter Clubs. All participants are asked to imagine receiving a ridiculously high visa bill at a restaurant, to start to laugh excessively on opening it and to then show the bill to each other.



I. ARGUMENT LAUGHTER («Naughty-Naughty«)

- a) Pretend to argue by pointing and wagging index fingers at each other.
- b) Laugh while doing it.



II. NO MONEY LAUGHTER

- a) Show empty pockets.
- b) Laugh with palms up.



III. LAUGHTER INJECTION

- a) Inject yourself with a laughter-shot.
- b) Laugh out loud.
- c) Inject others.



IV. ONE METER LAUGHTER

- a) Stretch one arm out.
- b) Hold a tape measure with your other arm.
- c) Pretend to measure your hand.
- d) First a few inches – a small laugh.
- e) Then half a meter up to your elbow – laugh a little more.
- f) Laugh out loud when you fully stretched out your arms.



V. VISA BILL LAUGHTER («Credit Card Laughter»)

- a) Hold your hands as if you're going to open a visa bill.
- b) Open your hands with palms towards you.
- c) Laugh at what you see.
- d) Share with others.



VI. MENTAL FLOSS LAUGHTER

- a) Wrap floss around your hands.
- b) Imagine to clean out every part of your body.
- c) Enjoy deeply and keep on laughing.



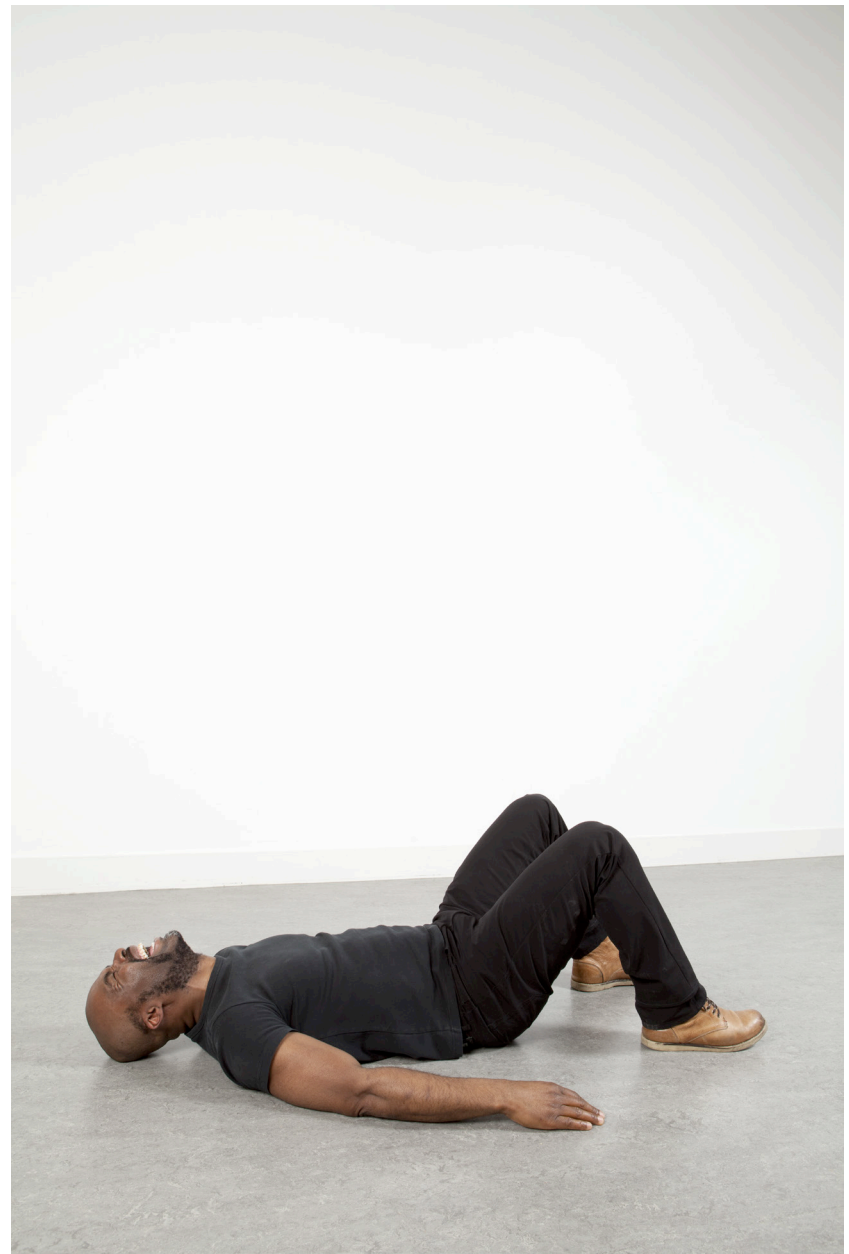
VII. LAUGHTER CREAM («Giggle Cream»/«Laughter Lotion»)

- a) Squeeze a tube (or scoop out of a jar).
- b) Apply to yourself (and others).
- c) Laugh while rubbing it onto your body.



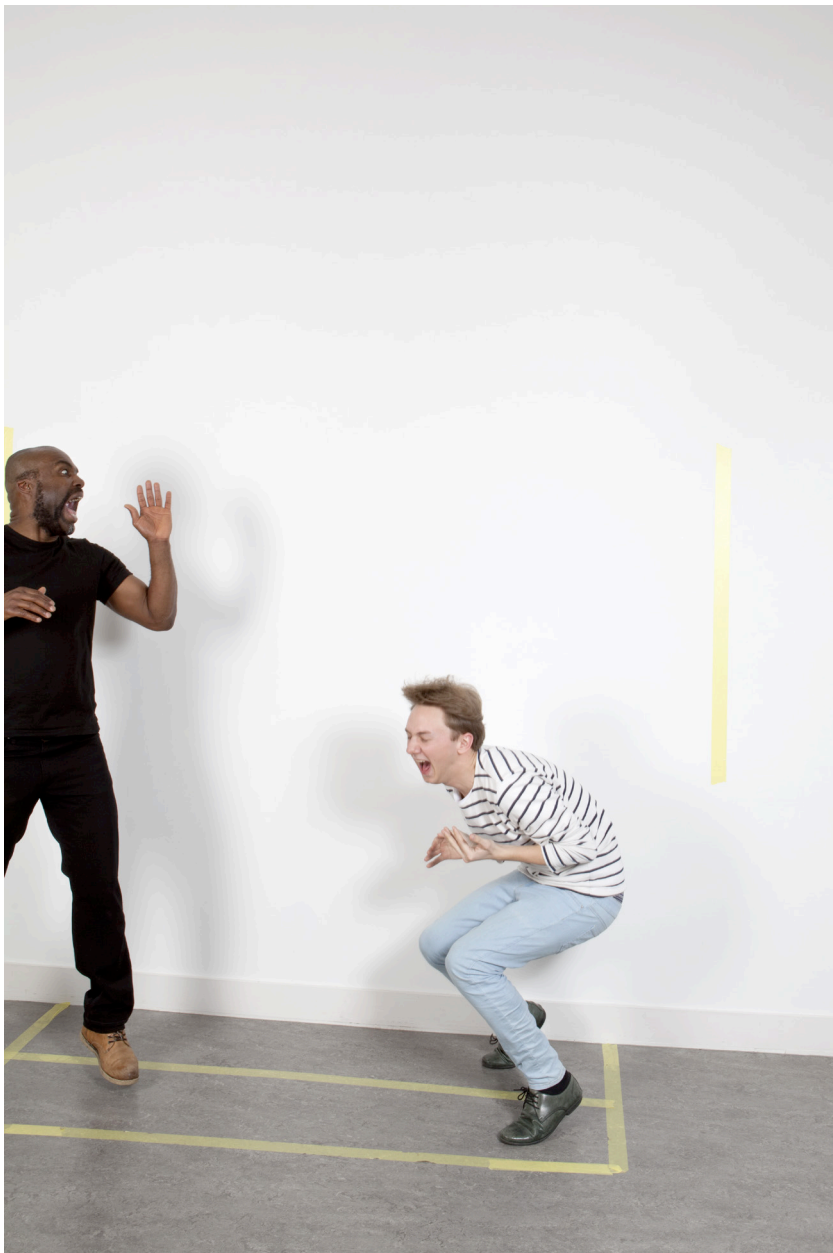
VIII. MOBILE PHONE LAUGHTER

- a) Hold your hand as if it is a phone.
- b) Bring the phone to your ear.
- c) Listen carefully and laugh at what you hear.
- d) Walk around and share your phone call with others. (optional)



IX. LAUGHTER RELAXATION

- a) Lay down with your back on the floor (or use a yoga mattress).
- b) Put your hands on your belly and start to giggle.
- c) Laugh out loud while slapping the floor.
- d) Slowly reduce the intensity of the laughter.
- e) Reach a state of total relaxation.



X. ELECTRIC SHOCK LAUGHTER

For two persons:

- Slowly reach for each other's hands as if to shake hands.
- Touching the other person's fingertips results into a heavy electrostatic shock.
- React extremely shocked and burst into laughter.



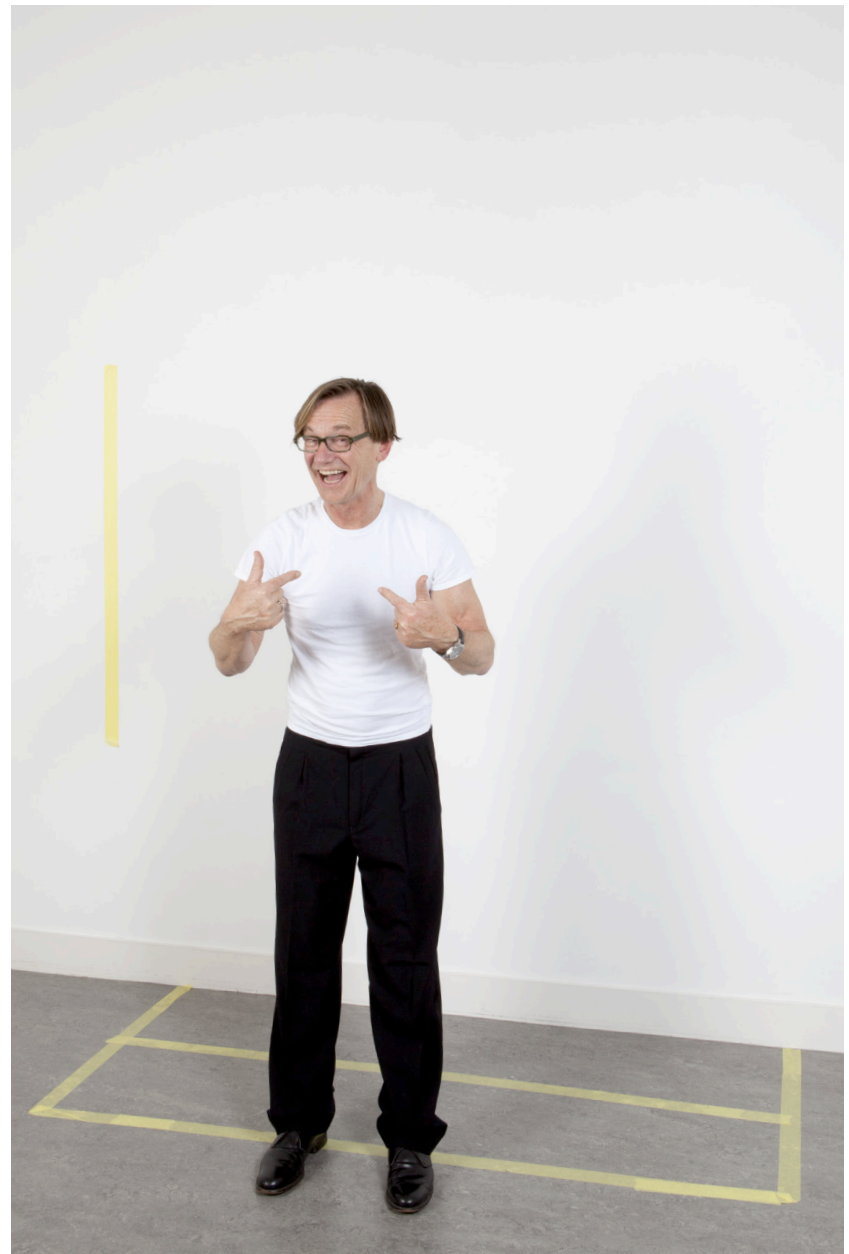
XI. LOVE YOURSELF LAUGHTER

- Touch and massage your body softly.
- Enjoy what you feel and laugh.
- Love yourself.



XII. BOSS QUIT OFFICE LAUGHTER

- a) Imagine to work in a boring office for an awful boss.
- b) You find out your boss just got fired.
- c) Start laughing out loud increasingly.
- d) Raise your arms and jump in the air (optional).
- e) You are incredibly happy.



XIII. LAUGH AT YOURSELF

- a) Point finger at your heart area (use both hands).
- b) Accept you do not need to be perfect.
- c) Laugh at yourself proudly.

COLOPHON

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Laughter Exercise Titles ©2007 Doctor Kataria School of Laughter Yoga

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