

# TEDx event on secure societies in The Hague



## TEDxHagueAcademy's recent Salon event looked at the theme of "Secure Societies." KAREN D.R. DE CORRALES gives us the highlights of the night.

A convict reading his morning paper on his tablet. A forensic specialist reviewing an exactly replicated crime scene from within a virtual helmet in a world where you know exactly when, where and in how many ways "Big Brother" is watching you.

You, first responder in case of a biological calamity, have been well-trained first-hand for precisely such an occurrence because we've effectively moved beyond merely measures of prevention.

One of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights' letters has been carved into your forearm: you are physically linked to your fellow man, reminded every moment that so

many of us are suffering some type of injustice every day.

The international, border-crossing infrastructure to tackle the complex, global issues of nuclear, biological and cybersecurity - to name a few - is effectively in place.

These are just some of the pictures painted during TEDxHagueAcademy's Salon event "Secure Societies" on Wednesday evening 19 March 2014 at The Hague University of Applied Sciences, in the larger framework of the Nuclear Security Summit.

A programme well put together and complete: four talks, seven pitches, one live interview, side events, clips of TED-veteran Terry Moore

and hilarious intermezzos, courtesy of Boom Chicago's Michael Diederich. The line-up diversely served the base questions, "What does it mean to live in a secure society?" and "How do you find a balance between security and freedom?"

In terms of information and entertainment: mission accomplished, so accolades to all. In terms of common ground: less so, as was perhaps to be expected given the extreme dissimilarity of the speakers' takes on security. So, not much cohesion aside from a kaleidoscopic approach on one very broad concept.

Would the programme have been better served by a moderator provid-

ing some linkage, instead of allowing a lot of open questions?

Of the top three most impressive presentations, third place goes to the extreme "Ubuntu" (we are all connected) idea of the Human Rights Tattoo movement, arranging the consecutive tattooing of all 6773 Declaration letters on willing individuals. After the talk quite a few audience members asserted that they would sign up.

Kenneth Luongo gets second place only because of an even more imposing number one. From the articles provided online and a quick word with Mr. Luongo, apparently the entire premise behind the Nuclear Security Summit may be traced back to his (and others') work in Russia, securing nuclear facilities after communism was abolished.

The creation of a first security model was followed by successful transferral to other facilities. Something similar is what should come from the succession of Nuclear Security Summits since 2010.

The clear number one, however, is "Clearing mines with the wind." Why didn't anyone think of this before the statistics of one soul getting maimed or killed every 22 minutes? Enter the forward-thinking Massoud Hasani; sounding relief and a mine-free Afghanistan, where kids may again safely venture onto the wide-open plains.

The stylish, sea-urchin-like device will roll across hazardous terrain and take out some four mines before giving up the ghost itself. Fields may so be cleared that conventional methods would take millennia to render secure. Look for "Mine Kafon" on Kickstarter.

Deserving honourable mention are Ramezani, Vos and Winthagen. Ramezani and his remarkable cartoons merit laudability in the face of obvious challenges, with his having to set up shop in Paris because of censorship in Iran.

Vos, an ex-soccer player and big

dreamer from Suriname, is now programme director at the Netherlands Forensic Institute. Kudos for the hands down vital and exciting innovation of virtualising crime scenes.

According to Winthagen, "design" apparently also applies to troubleshooting, based on the principle of fixing things at the core and avoiding measures heaping more fear onto an already heavily fear-laden civilisation.

The event certainly achieved higher informedness on the topics covered. And hopefully also sufficiently heightened awareness of an essential existing tension: between the lamentable, increased need for security in our modern societies and the preservation of not only a semblance of freedom and privacy, but also of our very humanity.

In terms of inspiration, the previous edition on Peace and Justice (9 September 2013) possibly had greater impact, due to a higher emotional/human factor.

Images still resound: Syrian Faisal Attrache and his poignant documentary on barbers in the Syrian refugee camp. Guatemalan reporter Idivina Hernandez and Rwandan Jean-Paul Samputu and their personal losses during the genocides in their respective countries. Most of all the shocking reality of the latter forgiving his friend for murdering his entire family.

A TEDtalk mightily serves the purpose of informing people about several issues, movements and viewpoints around the world, concentrated into one sitting; things that one would not normally come across in passing. While more people are correctly informed and inspired; the more we can hopefully begin to change things for the better.

A natural resulting question: "How many people does one such TEDtalk reach; how effective is the TED franchise, really?"

Something for another article, perhaps.