



Between hope and despair

The last moth has in many ways been dominated by the invitation from our Minister of Culture to take part in the discussion about the future of Danish cultural policy. Many people participate in various ways. This is fantastic! In order to make a difference, you have to believe in your ability to develop. You also need to understand the whole system that sets the conditions for the life we are a part of and for the culture we give shape and form. To further yourself, you must say goodbye to that which is not working. There is no alternative.

As artists we own our work as created out of 'free will'. Cooperation is our informal infrastructure. Together we must insist on the need for a certain inertia that makes it possible for us to work with things that demand time. Art. Here's where Dansehallerne has an important role to play. It is

my opinion that we as an institution must work for continuity in the working process and secure that there are jobs, education, retraining and a peer environment to help us reach the manifold. Our audience. Whatever we do together (artists-audiences) will remain in our minds.

Experiences stored as layers of experiences that make up a collective conscience. When we express a political or artistic demand, it should create some kind of effect.

We all live and work in a context. Today we fight not just for the conditions of artistic development, but also for the right for the many, to a meeting with art. Roughly 200 professional artists are members of Dansehallerne, representing a variety of skills, genres, aesthetic expressions, but also many different nationalities. In our programming we also focus on showing international artists and guest performances. By meeting the work of an unfamiliar artist, we enrich ourselves with new cultural and artistic experiences.

Martin Henriksen, DF member and spokesman for immigration issues, is quoted in Politiken on 9 May 2018: *"If it were up to DF, far more people should get out and far less in..."* (...meaning 'in Denmark', my comment). In this case the problem is not just immigrants and refugees, but also people like me, i.e. guest workers. According to Henriksen, it's us who take the jobs from the Danes, raise prices and corrupt the Danish language... It started me thinking for a while, then I forgot about it, until I was invited a week later to the "Summit Meeting on Danish Art Policy – in a Globalized World", arranged by the *Danish Art Council, Kulturmødet Mors* and *Have Kommunikation*. There I was in the conference room wondering if I as a non-Dane would have the right to speak and take part in the debate.

At this summit there was a lot of talk about Danish art and culture, about the heritage and the importance of the traditional art-institutions. Very little about the modern, the innovative or the experimental. Not much about art that stimulates, provokes or interacts. That which contributes to shaping the future of the country. According to the DF representative in the debate, the only art that is of importance is the art that can gather the nation and the people. It's about *'giving the people what they want'*. But if you're offered the only thing you already know and like, it will simply make you dumb. Both the DF and LA representatives used the meeting to claim that the state shouldn't subsidise art. It should exist on market terms. Little do they know! So the overall debate, that I referred to at the beginning, is getting ever more important to use as a means to bring forward ideas and suggestions that will give the minister a better understanding and arguments of what contemporary art can contribute.

The sun is out and summer draws nearer. Our senses soften in the heat, but we cannot let ourselves be seduced by all this beauty. There's still time until the minister puts a lid on the in-box. So if you haven't raised your voice and opened your heart yet, it's not too late to offer some input! That is what we do at Dansehallerne, every day, in performances, debates and intimate conversation with anyone who so wishes...

Efva

Dansehallerne's Director Efva Lilja writes a chronicle every month, which is distributed in our newsletter and published here on our website.