



Art – for whom?

Almost everything in society is divided into "us and them", into bubbles or boxes. There is a lot of talk about this within the arts; how the cultural bureaucracy tends to limit us by sticking to out-dated categories and genres. This generates a concrete

political discussion about this “us and them” from a point-of-view of cultural norms and the concept of responsibility.

It is easy to simplify and rationalise our existence by using categories and stereotypes as an effort to make the world around us explicable. It makes living easier. In art we often choose the opposite mode – we focus on the complex and irrational.

Nazar Akrami, who lectures on social psychology at the University of Uppsala, maintains that people strive to belong to a group for many reasons; to access certain advantages associated with a specific group or just to feel a sense of inclusion. Most of us want to be part of a group that is doing well. That goes for sports, politics – and the arts.

When I walk the streets of Copenhagen I see people of all ages, styles and cultures; I see people who are overweight, skinny, with various colour of skin, sexual identities and languages; I see so many individuals, who are difficult to put into boxes. I think of them as our audience, those who already know of us and those who will get to know us through the many different activities at Dansehallerne. We strive to create events where it is possible to meet both art and each other; we must strive to take responsibility and think outside the given, of all boxes. The point of departure must be that people are intelligent and perfectly capable of making up their own minds about participating, about their emotions, thoughts and decisions.

Within Dansehallerne’s program you can always find art that goes against the stereotypes and normative expressions that add to the current polarisation in society. We maintain that interesting and relevant artistic expressions strengthen us as humans and make us experience, reflect, discuss, think and continue to feel as sensuous beings... Art adds to an understanding of life that gives us tools to draw parallels and compare perspectives on different aspects of living. Understanding doesn’t make us all compassionate. Not everybody gets a kick out of choreographic performative art, but we must give all of us a fair chance. In addition we offer a forum for conversation, for personal meetings and other events for interaction, discovery and reflection. That’s so exciting!

The Greek philosopher Socrates talked in his day about the need for reflection. He said that “a life without reflection is not worth living”. Philosophy is occupied with the meaning of life – and so is art. We all have some kind of philosophy of life, which makes it important to reflect over others. That is a way of using our creative abilities.

I walk the streets of Copenhagen and think: “You there, just wait and see!”

Efva

PS Want to talk about this and related subjects? Come to *Meet, Eat and Talk* 5th of December at 7pm in the Café Polykrom at Den Frie. Talking and eating – for free.

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