



TO LIVE YOUR LONGING

I often say that it is curiosity that pushes us forward, but this morning when I'm writing this letter to you, I think that maybe it is longing. To long for something. I guess the difference is that longing demands a goal. I must know what I'm longing for. Curiosity demands risk-taking and a willingness to approach the unknown. So, maybe both are needed. I want to live curious and allow myself to long for things.

My longing is constant. My longing has many objects, but to avoid the private, I write about my longing for art that can come as a positive experience. Art is for me some apertures into that which is not yet seen, thought or lived. Alternative descriptions of reality that sometimes just seduce you, other times trigger your mind and your senses with new

experiences, thoughts and actions. That's what I want to happen. I long for engaging encounters. That's why my curiosity takes me to new performances, exhibitions, concerts and to other events manifested (masked?) as art. I often leave disappointed.

So much within art is just an affirmation of conventions about what is "good", about how it should be. Cowardly evasive, yet sometimes commercially successful. I just don't want to see confirmation. I want to see something that demands my participation, something that generates a meaningful dialogue. This longing is a hallmark of Dansehallerne's program this spring. The longing that wants to trigger your curiosity; that's why we have created Close Encounters at Den Frie the first week of April. Close Encounters is a festival that excels in participatory and interactive works, where we as an active audience can take part and make a difference.

Many of the artists we will meet during Close Encounters are brave enough to venture into the unknown by letting the audience participate and interact. Don't miss this chance of getting to know other people's longing, driving forces and stories. Check our calendar on the web – you'll see what I mean! Dansehallerne is also co-producing the circus festival C!CAF and other events. Bring your curiosity and come!

In my latest newsletter I wrote that this one will be about fear as a driving force. Inevitably, we see the result of this every day. We see what happens when fear of the unknown becomes a decisive factor, when the inexplicable must be suppressed or when your own chosen direction seems to be too much at variance with others. We all harbour a measure of fear, but the techniques of harnessing it differ.

I'm afraid of so many things, but I constantly challenge my fears with actions that sometimes leave me absolutely appalled. Curiosity and longing push me on. I want more than I can cope with. Always. All my life I've heard that what I want is impossible. Impossible because it doesn't fit the norm, or because it is not what is expected of a woman, or a person of a certain age. When I was young, I was too young, now I'm too old. What for? Says who?

During my years as the Artistic Director of Dansehallerne, I've many times been asked to calm down. I've heard that "this is not how we usually do" or "this will never work". It doesn't come from the artists or my co-workers. They've been supportive all along. It comes from other people I meet, civil servants and strangely enough from some politicians. They, who should really be driven by curiosity and longing, by visions of progress towards a future we have yet to see. Right? No development without risk-taking. No progress without challenging your fear of failing, of being misused or misunderstood.

Do come and look, experience, reflect, enjoy or get mad. Everything is possible!

Efva

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