Contextualizing Dance Dance Dramaturgy as a practice of interlinking Art with the Society

Detailed Program - Contributions & Bios

The program of the symposium "Contextualizing Dance - Dance Dramaturgy as a practice of interlinking Art with the Society" consists of five panels, a session of shared practices, three artistic interventions and an impulse session - building up two intense days of common thinking in relations. The panels are curated along different thematic frames for which we have invited one or two speakers to contribute to with their certain expertise and questions. The form of contribution is free from academic conventions. Yet, they can be facilitated as classical lectures or in more participatory forms such as in short workshop formats, and so forths. The session of shared practices allows us a concrete look inside into the collaboration between a choreographer and a dramaturg, while the artistic interventions can be understood as alternative forms of contributions to the program - fueling the discourse through the art form we are talking about. Last but not least, the impulse session on Friday will help us to collect and gather the manifold contributions of the day through a certain personal perspective putting out for common discussion.

Each Panel, as well as the impulse session, will be moderated and consists of at least 45 minutes for questions and moderated discourse together with the audience. The Panels will be moderated by Lars Dideriksen, Merel Heering, Synne Behrndt. The discussions and discourses will also be accompanied and, if necessary, triggered by our Key Reflector Synne Behrndt. Furthermore, the overall program will consist of shorter and longer breaks to let thoughts set and let some fresh air and small bites breath through the brain and the stomach. We are very much looking forward to each contribution and lively discussions around them together with everyone participating in this symposium. Welcome!

12th December 2019

Pre-Program: Nutcracker - 19:30

13th December 2019

Opening Note by Thomas Schaupp & Jeppe H. Nissen 10:00-10:15

Panel 1: Reflections on considering the Audience 10:15-11:15

Panel 2: "Curating Art - Facilitating Contexts" 11:30-12:30

Artistic Intervention 1 12:30-13:00

LUNCH-BREAK 13:00-14:00

Panel 3: How to (not) become a dramaturg 14:00-15:00

Shared practice: Contextualize Collaboration - 15:30-16:30

Walk'n'Talk to Dramaturgy Institute - 16:30-17:00

Impulse Session - hosted by Danjel Andersson 17:00-18:00

<u>Dinner - 18:00-20:00</u>

Artistic intervention 2 - 20:00

14th December 2019

Panel 4: Mapping Dramaturgy - 9:30-10:30

Artistic Intervention 3 - 10:30-11:00

Morning Tea 11:00-11:30

Panel 5: Critical thinking and Contextualisation 11:30-12:30

Final words 12:30 - 13:00

Farewell lunch - 13:00

12th December 2019

Pre-Program: Nutcracker - 19:30

WHAT THE NUT?

Prepare for a creative pileup when the wonderfully unconventional band, John The Houseband, meets Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker". In this very special version of the famous ballet, the world as we know it is turned upside down. On their journey through the galaxy, the six protagonists, Hazel, Wal, Pea, Coco, Almond and Pistachio, land on the planet Nutcracker where they are greeted by the amazing and bewildering sounds of Tchaikovsky. With astonishing inventiveness, they cheerfully set out to conquer unknown territory in an energetic, other-worldly musical for the whole family.

John The Houseband is born of choreographers, performers and artists from Sweden, Iceland, Belgium, Spain and Germany who came together in Amsterdam in 2008 to form a delightfully unusual art and band project that perceptively unites performance and music.

From 8 years and up. The singing and speaking parts in the performance will be in English (but is over all based on music and visual elements).



13th December 2019

Opening Note by Thomas Schaupp & Jeppe H. Nissen 10:00-10:15

Jeppe H. Nissen's work focus is to support the independent artists, by designing operational, lightweight programmes such as the Residency programme of Bora Bora. He is educated as a dramaturg from Aarhus University and has been working with the independent artists of Aarhus since 2004, in a lot of different roles - among these: Dramaturgy, lighting design and scenography. He has been working as a producer and dramaturg at Bora Bora since 2011. And his main subject is the development of the dance field in Aarhus and Western Denmark.

Thomas Schaupp is a freelancing dance dramaturg based in Reykjavík and Berlin. Since 2010, he is collaborating with several international choreographers. As a mentor and advisor for young choreographers he collaborates with institutions such as Dansearena Nord in Hammerfest, Oslo National Academy of the Arts and Festival Tanztage in Berlin. Thomas is a guest teacher at the HZT Berlin and LHí Reykjavík and facilitates workshops on dance-dramaturgy in choreographic centres across Europe. In collaboration with Ibsen International and Goethe Institut Beijing he also co-curates a Cultural Exchange Program on Dance Dramaturgy in China. For the season 2020-2021, Thomas is a member of the Jury for the Berlin Senate's Department for Culture and Europe funding program for existing works.

Panel 1: Reflections on considering the Audience 10:15-11:15

An essential aspect of the debate between art and context is the consideration of the audience. Who do I address and into which community would I like to work? And how do I take the audience into account or trigger their interest? And what is the role of dramaturgy in it? With the contributions of Tina Tarpgaard and Pia Krämer, we will start this symposium thinking from the heart of artistic contextualization.

Tina Tarpgaard: "It is your work - but it is their lives" (Lene Skytt)

In recent years the focus of my choreographic work has been turned increasingly towards how, where, and with whom I as an artist engage. Like many of my colleagues, this has also meant reconnecting to civic engagement work. This has resulted in a series of projects involving and placing citizens in the center of the creation with either their stories, their bodies, or their professional competencies. Most of projects where communities are co-creators are still on going. All of them have brought forward several critical questions that touch upon both ethics and sustainability. In presenting the specific projects, I look forward to sharing these questions that arose along the way.

Tina Tarpgaard, Choreographer and artistic director, recoil performance group. My work is evolving around the de-centring of the human (body/performer). THE MEMBRANE PROJECT (2017–2019) is my recent series of work dealing with human identity through choreographic encounters with the human and non-human. THE MEMBRANE PROJECT also marks a desire to challenge working methods and format of my choreographic work. Presented on traditional theatre stages, as I collapse (2017) has microscopic algae as its unconventional protagonist. Conceived for galleries, art exhibition venues and unconventional spaces, MASS-bloom explorations (2018) is choreographed for thousands of worms and one human. Having our own species Homo Sapiens and our way of organising our habitats as its focal point, Extended Falls to Humanity (2019) will take place outside the art institutions and offers co-creation with local communities. In 2018–2021, I am part of the Danish Art Council's committee for the Performing Arts.

Pia Krämer: Reflections from a vast countryside

In my introduction I would like to share my experience and know-how as a former collaborator of Espaço do Tempo, Montemor-o-Novo, Portugal. As well as draw a short narrative of 15 years of co-creating this project. I would like to point out what it means to start an artist residencies in a middle age convent, in a small provincial town in the center of Portugal, with a vast community project and artistic programme, The ideas behind, ways of communicating contemporary dance and theatre in this environment, difficulties, different states of development, dealing with financial crisis, the reaction to national and international artists and the impact to the Contemporary Dance scene.

Pia Krämer, german, studied Dance and Psychology. She worked as dance pedagogue, choreographer and dance movement therapist in her own studio space in Germany and internationally. Since 2000 she lives and works in Portugal. She was teaching dance movement therapy in several Masters Studies in Universities in Portugal. Since 2003 - 2019 she worked at Espaço do Tempo in different functions. She was responsible for the community project, artist residency programme, international relations and the coordination of the Portuguese Platform. Since 2017 she is president of the European Dancehouse Network, since Mai 2019, she shares this task with Laurent Meheust. Actually she collaborates as Senior Advisor for Dancehouse Helsinki and is recently developing new approaches to arts development management in collaboration with professionals from various art fields.

Panel 2: "Curating Art - Facilitating Contexts" 11:30-12:30

The framework conditions for artistic work tremendously determine artistic creation. At best, they enable and support stable and safe working conditions and think in relation to the local society. The relationship between the artist and the institution is an essential, if complex one - among other things, because two different dramaturgical approaches meet: the one that thinks out of artistic work and the other that thinks into spectators and art politics. With two contributions by Jesper de Neergard and Bára Sigfúsdóttir, we will address this topic in this panel.

Jesper de Neergaard: Contextualizing Dance and Context for Curating

To curate contemporary dance in Denmark has its challenges. Almost all potential audience haven't seen dance before and couldn't care less. To make them understand that they need dance is both necessary and impossible. First audiences must be interested in going to/seeing the dance. Don't bother inviting the uninterested. Go to them with site specific dance or just in the open space near them. Second fragile moment is being hooked or unhooked by attending their first dance performance. Commercial strategies have in Denmark proven to be destructive strategies for any artform – especially performing arts. You just make audience used to spectacular and 'easy' performances as the new shit. Bora Bora must show the dance that exists. Contextualizing is our hope of making the meaningful 'hooking' on an artistic level and not commercial. Artists must do the 'hooking' in collaboration with the presenter. The company/choreographer must work on the audience communication inside and outside the oeuvre without compromising the idea. So presenting contemporary dance is an event that includes PR, marketing, what happens before and after the performance as well as the performance itself. We owe that to audiences that will have their life slightly improved by feeling included in a dance performance experience.

Jesper de Neergaard has an MA in Prehistoric Archaeology with specialty in development of cultures. Educated Stage Director from the National School of Performing Arts in Copenhagen. Directing performances in Denmark, Sweden and France. From 2000 to 2011 the Artistic Director at Entré Scenen in Aarhus presenting contemporary dance and theatre. From 2011 Artistic Director at Bora Bora – dance and visual theatre presenting contemporary dance. Directing Bora Bora Residency Centre from 2017, which is a residency program for research residencies for both national and international companies. Bora Bora is partner in Aerowaves and EDN and member of IETM.

Bára Sigfúsdóttir: Working with movement in a moving world - in search of sustainable and meaningful connections

Bára Sigfúsdóttir will share her thoughts on working with and through movement, time and space when encountering and exploring different contexts of presenting her work in glocal communities. Bára speaks from a personal perspective about the contextualisation of her work and shares her expectations towards curators and towards herself in a cycle that develops over time.

Bára Sigfúsdóttir is a performer and choreographer who studied at the Icelandic Academy of the Arts, Amsterdam University of the Arts and P.A.R.T.S. in Brussels. Bára creates highly visual and reflective work in which the position of the individual in relation to society and nature are recurrent motives. In her choreographic work, Bára is interested in giving special attention to the details and nuances of our bodies. Parts that often have become invisible and almost forgotten in our everyday life, such as our toes, elbows, other smaller ligaments and parts of our face. The movement material is evoked through improvisational processes where a practise of listening and allowing physical material to emerge kinaesthetically guides the creative process. Bára is currently based in Norway and her performances tour both locally and internationally.

Artistic Intervention 1 12:30-13:00

"C U There" as Intervention - choreographed/performed by Fabio Liberti

"I am personally against description of pieces, but as choreographer I have to accept a system that asks me for it with strict rules. It would be interesting for me to talk about this."

With his artistic intervention, that consists of the solo dance work "C U There", Fabio Liberti would like to question how dramaturgy should not only include the piece in its structure and intentions, but also everything that is "around" it: its title, its pictures, the text written in programs...

Fabio Liberti, Italian, has graduated at Codarts Rotterdam Dance Academy in 2004. Since graduation he has been engaged full time in dance companies in Holland (Conny Janssen Danst), Germany (Stadttheater Hildesheim), Switzerland (Stadttheater Saint Gallen), Italy (AIEP) and Denmark (Danish Dance Theatre). Fabio Liberti's choreographic research has been directed towards mixing different communicative elements with the aim to develop a language to discuss subjects connected to everyday lives in this particular social time. Always using movement as primary communicative tool, he often combines it with text, theatricality, music and visual elements to create what he refers to as an abstract narrative world. His independent works received several prizes and awards and has been performed at numerous venues and festival in Europe, including commissioned works for Danish Dance Theatre (Denmark), Dark Circles Contemporary Dance (Texas), Mainfranken Theater Würzburg (Germany), Landesbühnen Sachsen Dance Company (Germany), EDGE Dance Company (England), Norrdans (Sweden).

LUNCH-BREAK 13:00-14:00

Panel 3: How to (not) become a dramaturg 14:00-15:00

In this panel we would like to deal with the role of dramaturgical thinking and scrutinize a question that is all too often asked: what actually makes a dramaturg and what skills does one need for it? And how do I work dramaturgically as a choreographer when I can't afford a dramaturg? And does it always need a dramaturg? But also, what does the significance and presence of dramaturgy within a context say about the arts? Merel Heering and Fabio Liberty deal with these and other questions in their contributions.

Merel Heering: (Self)doubt as a source & strategy

To me dramaturgy is not about the theory of reflecting, it is the practice of reflecting back to another human being while sharing space with them - both firm and with compassion. To me dramaturgy is about activating people to become accountable for their choice making and making sure I am accountable for mine. It is about the brave conversations we should be having. (Dramaturgical) dialogue to me therefore starts with the willingness to (self) reflect. Contextualizing dance starts with self-awareness on your own position. Where are you now and what do you want to further develop in yourself as well as in the world? This question needs to be asked over and over again, as we are all transitioning constantly, as is the world around us. Therefore I would like to propose two tasks you can do together in pairs, through which we can practice being in dialogue, looking each other in the eye and offering support through questioning. We will be checking in with our own main (artistic or personal) challenge at the moment as well as tackling presumptions in the way others and we ourselves speak about our practices. I believe sharing these two exercises form the best summary of my approach to dramaturgy so far and are a way for me to activate and share my values with you by staying in the vulnerability of doing and sharing knowledge in a way that I don't take ownership over, but we are owning together as a (temporary) community.

Merel Heering graduated from the master Theatre and Dance Studies at the University of Utrecht in 2010. After her graduation Merel worked for institutions such as Nederlands Dans Theater, Dutch Dance Festival, ICKamsterdam and Theater aan Zee. As an independent dance dramaturge, Merel now has a diverse practice. She works with independent choreographers, dance companies, festivals and dance houses across Europe. Merel has an ongoing dialogue with B Motion festival in Italy, where she facilitates the Choreographic Research Week. She mentors the talent development trajectory Dance & Dramaturgy in Switzerland. In The Netherlands Merel is closely affiliated with dance house Dansateliers in Rotterdam and SPRING Performing Arts Festival in Utrecht, with whom she develops formats for conversation between (dance) professionals, as well as between artists and audiences. She also works as a dramaturge and curator for Jonge Harten Theaterfestival in Groningen and is currently a core member of the advisory board for art and culture of the city council of The Hague, advocating for dance.

Fabio Liberti: "How I became a performer, a choreographer, a costume designer, a light designer, my own dramaturge,..."

I would like to draw a discussion on dramaturgy from my own artistic perspective: From how I became a choreographer and still try to create my own knowledge and define my own profession, starting from intuition and instinct that are the triggers of creativity. And from the challenges along the way - such as the expectations or simply economic necessities of being ones own light designer, a costume designer, a composer, sometimes your own dancer, always the dramaturge, a politician and a sociologist, and so on.

From this perspective and considering dramaturgy as an inner part of choreography - and therefore a choreographer unconsciously as a dramaturg - I question why is there a need in choreography to have a separate figure taking care of dramaturgy? May it be because the art form of dance has detached too much from the audience? Is the dramaturg a bridge between the artist and the audience? When was the void created?

Shared practice: Contextualize Collaboration - 15:30-16:30

Andreas Constantinou & Jeppe H. Nissen: Sharing practice - Collaboration

This session takes its outset in our collaborative practice as choreographer and dramaturge. We've been working together several times with different levels of engagement and is at the moment inside Andreas' upcoming performative video installation *Champions*. We shall try to do this session as an informal talk about how we collaborate and what impact this has on the process so far. How do we see the others role in the process? How do we prepare for the collaboration? What to do when it gets to the most sensitive points?

Walk'n'Talk to Dramaturgy Institute - 16:30-17:00

Impulse Session - hosted by Danjel Andersson 17:00-18:00

Danjel Andersson is the new Director of Dansehallerne in Copenhagen. He comes directly from an employment as director of MDT, a venue for dance and choreography in Stockholm. He has been a director there since 2010. Andersson has a background as editor, critic, dramaturge and festival director with a master in literature and theater studies. He has previous experience from Dagens Nyheter, City Theater in Stockholm, the Theater Academy in Stockholm and has run the independent theater magazine Visslingar & Rop, The festival organization he inaugurated Perfect Performance and the international festival TUPP in Uppsala city theater prior to his work in MDT. 2017 Andersson received the honorary award in performing arts by the City of Stockholm for his work in MDT and internationalizing the Stockholm dance scene.

Artistic intervention 2 - 20:00

Presentation of workshop 'the wind dance,' and a work with a text by Martin Crimp: Advice to Iraqi women

By: Adriana La Selva: is working on a practice-based Ph.D. at the University of Ghent in Belgium, in association with the School of Arts (KASK) and the Institute a.pass in Brussels, where she is investigating contemporary performer training processes in relation to politics of embodied research.

Marije Nie creates interdisciplinary theater pieces, creative interventions and workshops.

Emilie Lund: Danseuddannet i Mexico, koreograf, underviser i Tyskland og Mexico. Emilie Lund deltager med workshop (den 5. dec) og soloforestillingen: *Exit Dukkehjem* (inspireret af Henrik Ibsens *Et dukkehjem*) den 6. dec kl 19.30 Kasernen, lille sal Langelandsgade 139

14th December 2019

Panel 4: Mapping Dramaturgy - 9:30-10:30

The start of the second day is devoted to the mapping of dramaturgy as a whole both as a theory as well as a Practice. We dare an attempt to understand dramaturgy as a socio-political tool for contextualization from those two poles. Peter M. Boenisch's contribution will provide us with concrete examples and approaches.

Peter M. Boenisch: Mapping Dramaturgies: The City as Counter-Text

Dramaturgy in the 21st century has become understood as a practice, or even more widely as a way of thinking, which is no longer confined to the structural composition of (performing) art-works. Much rather, it is seen to engender a 'catalytic mode of working' that interweaves artistic creativity with the institutional contexts of art production and wider socio-political and economic dimensions (cf. Georgelou e.a. 2017, 'Part I: Dramaturgy as Working on Actions' – [yet another] influential dramaturgic theory emerging from the field of dance dramaturgy). Where Milo Rau, as incoming Artistic Director of NT Ghent, had identified it as a central problem of contemporary art-making that "the city itself is constantly excluded from the work of the 'Stadttheater'" (https://www.ntgent.be/en/manifest, Preliminary Note), this diagnosis is certainly not only true for dramatic theatre. The task for contemporary dramaturgy can therefore be seen in activating the opening of art, and the art institution, into the wider public sphere of the city around the theatre, and the wider 'body of society'.

In this contribution, I will explore how a recent example from the field of the (contemporary global) visual art market may offer a tool to concretise such dramaturgic desire to intervene relevantly into a local civic context. For the 2018 edition of the nomadic visual arts biennial Manifesta, which took place in Palermo, the Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas was commissioned to compile the 'Palermo Atlas'. It should offer the basis 'to permeate the 2018 biennial with the cultural richness of our city' and to provide 'the tools to connect the threads of Palermo's past and recent history to future prospects for development', as Palermo's mayor Leoluca Orlando described it. I am going to discuss this example of dramaturgic city mapping as a potential catalyst for creating situated, diverse, and ethical 'actions at work', not only in the field of dance, which follow the artistic ambition 'not only to discuss a globalised world, but to reflect it and influence it', as the preface to Milo Rau's Ghent Manifesto further phrased it. To do so, I will connect the approach of dramaturgic mapping with the strategies of 'counter textual dramaturgy' that US-American scholar and dramaturg D.J.Hopkins already outlined (equally drawing on Koolhaas) back in 2003. I see the crucial importance of this dramaturgic work in the way it transcends the problematic focus on representational politics of singular identities towards the aesthetic representation of a common polis and a shared community.

Peter M. Boenisch is Professor of Dramaturgy at Aarhus University, Denmark, and also part-time Professor of European Theatre at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama/University of London. He was a co-founder of the European Theatre Research network (ETRN). His main research areas are theatre direction, dramaturgy, and the aesthetic politics of the theatre institution. His books include Directing Scenes and Senses: The Thinking of Regie (Manchester University Press 2015), The Theatre of Thomas Ostermeier (Routledge 2016), and Littlewood – Strehler – Planchon in the series European Stage Directors (co-edited with Clare Finburgh, Bloomsbury Methuen 2018). He also edited the 30th anniversary edition of David Bradby and David Williams's Directors' Theatre (Macmillan Red Globe 2019). He currently works on the 3-year research project "Reconfiguring dramaturgy for a global culture: Changing practices in 21st century European theatre", funded by the Aarhus University Foundation.

Artistic Intervention 3 - 10:30-11:00

"FLÖKT" as Intervention - by choreographer Bára Sigfúsdottir

Choreographer Bára Sigfúsdóttir and dancers Aëla Labbé and Meri Pajunpää are currently in residency at Bora Bora. They will share movement material in a work in progress showing of FLÖKT – a flickering flow, a performance by Bára Sigfúsdóttir and visual artist Tinna Ottesen.

FLÖKT is an exploration of our bodily connection with the world surrounding us. It suggests that nature is not something that solely exists outside of us but also something we can sense and experience through our bodies. The audience is invited into a large silk dome, an environment which is in constant state of transition and allows you to feel the close proximity of things, bodies, the space, the sound, the lights and the massive presence of this environment which literally surrounds you. Together we undertake a journey inside an interconnected poetic miniature of our world.

Morning Tea 11:00-11:30

Panel 5: Critical thinking and Contextualisation 11:30-12:30

Critical thinking is also a core competence of dramaturgical thinking and something that we have practiced together in the last two days. But how can we think critically in contextualization? How do critics approach the subject who, like dramaturges, form a kind of interface between art and the audience - but who perhaps think more from the spectator's point of view than from the work of art? Monna Dithmer and Annette van Zwoll will provide us with two suggestions.

Annette van Zwoll: "Critical thinking"

Critical thinking is a broad notion possibly linked to many different connotations, ideologies and sense of hierarchies. And the same time, many of us are considered to be critical thinkers and implement it consciously or unconsciously within our practice (whichever that practice may be). In this short get-together we will collectively explore the potential of decoding some of the concepts of critical thinking on the one hand and on the other hand we'll try to find ways to create potential practices around it that can be fruitful for individual practices.

Annette van Zwoll is an independent dance dramaturge, curator, text writer and international project developer in the European dance field and a forceful and committed ally in the realisation of projects. She is co-initiator and programmer of What You See Festival (https://whatyouseefestival.nl/en/), an international art festival on gender and identity, and artistic associate of dance company Bitter Sweet Dance / Liat Waysbort (www.bittersweetdance.com). She is based in Berlin and engaged with several independent choreographers and festivals, is advisor for the Dutch Performing Arts Fund as well as documentalist for the European Dancehouse Network (http://ednetwork.eu) and writes for springbackmagazine.com. Her interests are broad, but she is passionate about the politics of the body and how it can, through dance, reflect on structures of thinking and doing, and offer alternatives. www.vanzwoll.com

Monna Dithmer: "Rethink criticism"

How to further new forms of critical thinking and writing as an integrated practice in the field of the arts and culture in general. The artistic landscape is under transformation due to cultural capitalism and digitalization, and new ways of working and collaborating across disciplines and sectors are being developed. Critical reflection is vital in order to create new concepts, analytic frameworks, and a common ground of understanding. Can we create a more invigorating critical dialogue between artists, academics, people in the media and cultural sector etc. in terms of for example critical acupuncture?

Monna Dithmer is a theatre and dance critic for the Danish newspaper Politiken since 1994. She is also part-time lecturer of Performance Design at Roskilde University. She has been part of research programmes in media culture and urban aesthetics at the University of Copenhagen and has contributed to several

publications such as 'Skønhedens Hotel - Hotel Pro Forma' (2015) and 'Scenekunst i Danmark - Veje til udvikling' (2010).

Final words 12:30 - 13:00

Thomas Schaupp and Jeppe H. Nissen will wrap up the

Farewell lunch - 13:00

can be packed to carry with you if, you need to leave early.

Moderations & Reflections

Key Reflector: Synne Behrndt

Synne Behrndt is a lecturer, researcher and dramaturg. She has published and presented papers on dramaturgy and is the co-author of the book Dramaturgy and Performance (Palgrave, 2008/2016) and joint editor of Palgrave's book series 'New Dramaturgies'. As a dramaturg she has worked with devising companies in the UK and most recently she was dramaturg on choreographer Milla Koistinen's piece 'One Next To Me' (premiere 2019 in Berlin). She is the co-founder of Århus-based company Secret Hotel and is currently lecturer in Dramaturgy at the University of the Arts, Stockholm. She holds a PhD from the University of Winchester, UK.

Moderators: Lars Dideriksen, Merel Heering, Synne Behrndt