

COPENHAGEN
EDITION

Can a tunnel
to Germany
renew life in
a neglected
hinterland?

One day
with the
lawyers
fighting for
the street
people

It's not just
a sandwich
– the Bánh
Mì is the
next fast
food hit



THE MURMUR

Many people are excluded from mainstream society due to chance, poor decision-making or structural injustice. For this issue of The Murmur we spoke to Sine Plambech, whose research focuses on sex workers. We also went on walkabout with the street lawyers who provide legal counsel for Copenhagen's homeless, drug users and other disenfranchised groups.

But it's worth thinking about another kind of exclusion, which is being discussed as we go to print.

A majority of Danish politicians want to ban Hizb ut-Tahrir, an Islamic organisation whose ambition is to establish a global Caliphate. Hostile toward democracy, they often use municipal facilities to host conferences and talks that are frequently segregated by gender.

Danish law allows for the banning of groups that use violence or call for violence to achieve their goals. While their former spokesperson Fadi Abdullatif was given a 60-day suspended sentence in 2002, after distributing fliers calling on Muslims to kill Jews, Hizb ut-Tahrir doesn't make explicit calls for violence.

Their current spokesperson, Junes Kock, is more rhetorically gifted, though he does suffer a little from hyperbole.

"The contradictions inherent in Western values and their inability to create a harmonious society are becoming increasingly obvious to many people," he wrote in a recent press release.

He would have to be deluded to

think Denmark isn't one of the most harmonious places you could possibly live. But of course he knows this, and anyone with half a brain is impervious to Hizb ut-Tahrir's inane anti-Western propaganda.

Not that everything he says is total rubbish. Anti-Muslim prejudice in Denmark, which he often presents in Facebook updates, is sadly a reality. And yes, the Western capitalist world does suffer from violence, drug abuse and a degree of disharmony.

But it doesn't follow that the answer is an Islamic monostate. There is nothing mutually exclusive about being a Muslim and living in Denmark. For despite the unfortunate prejudice many Muslims experience, there is no safer place for a religious minority to practice than in our imperfect, but liberal and secular, society.

Of course the West has made mistakes – the Iraq War, QED – but our inclusive societies are qualitatively superior to Kock's preferred system of governance. We should meet his arguments with counter arguments. If he doesn't budge, that's fine. We don't lock up or banish people because they have bad ideas.

Banning Hizb ut-Tahrir would undermine the inclusion that makes our societies the best imperfect systems in the world. Religious dogma is far less dangerous than isolated and excluded individuals with nothing to lose.

THE MURMUR

In order
to exist,
you need
a strategy
for living.
You can
just exist,
or you can
make a
manifesto,
and by
making a
manifesto
you design
your life
and give it
shape

THIERRY GEOFFROY, AKA THE COLONEL

page 30

CONTRIBUTORS



Elias Thorsson Elias is pursuing his masters degree at the University of Copenhagen, studying American politics. He is the assistant editor at The Murmur and wrote the article about the street attorneys, Gadejuristen.



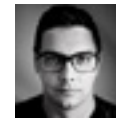
Lesley Price An Australian freelance journalist hailing from Sydney, Lesley recently completed a masters degree focusing on Arctic media at The University of Copenhagen. This issue she interviewed the migration researcher Sine Plambech.



Nereya Otieno A writer and creator with a background in cognitive science, musicology and communication, Nereya likes to discuss all three while eating sandwiches. She wrote our research column this month.



Lesley-Ann Brown A Trinidadian American freelance writer living in Copenhagen, Lesley-Ann studied writing at The New School, NYC. She wrote about getting kicked out of school and moving to Trinidad aged ten.



Rasmus Degnbøl an award winning documentary photographer and filmmaker, Rasmus is currently a masterclass mentee at the world-renowned VII Photo in New York. This issue he photographed Rødbyhavn for our feature on the town.



Alastair Philip Wiper From CERN in Switzerland, to radio observatories in Peru, Alastair is a photographer working with the weird and wonderful subjects of industry, science and architecture. He visited the DMZ between North and South Korea for this issue.



Susan Daniels Our article about Rødbyhavn was pitched by Susan, who works in the tourism and hospitality sector in the Femern cross-border region.



Thomas Fleurquin Co-founder of The Copenhagen Post newspaper and founder of the Distortion Festival, Thomas writes a monthly column.



Liam Duffy A writer from Galway, Ireland, focusing on poetry, culture and urbanism, Liam wrote an article about urban renewal in Copenhagen.

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MONTH IN REVIEW



Peter Stanners

A new alternative
New political party Alternativet has acquired enough signatures to run in the next general election. Former culture minister Uffe Elbæk founded the party in 2013 after he broke with the Radikale Venstre.

Billions of Apples
Apple announced the construction of a state-of-the-art data centre in the Jutland town of Viborg that will create around 300 jobs. The company intends to spend 6.3 billion kroner on the construction and operation of the centre, and a further 6.6 billion on a similar facility in Ireland. Together, the two centres will run Apple's online services in Europe, which include the iTunes and App Stores. This 12.9 billion kroner investment is the biggest the company has ever made in Europe. As part of Apple's commitment to environmental issues, both facilities will run on 100 percent renewable energy. "We believe that innovation is about leaving the world better than we found it, and that the time for tackling climate change is now," said Lisa Jackson, Apple's Vice President of Environmental Initiatives, in a press release.



Apple

FLAP OFF
Low-wage airline Ryanair will soon be flying from Copenhagen, but has refused to employ its Denmark-based staff according to local collective bargaining agreements. This was the result of an historic meeting between the Irish company and labour unions in London on February 20. Concessions were always unlikely, since Ryanair's commercial director David O'Brian proclaimed before the meeting, "We cooperate directly with our staff. We don't cooperate with unions."

Elias Thorsson



Flickr / Gyver Chang

GOVERNMENT DID NOT ACT ON TAX FRAUD
Leaked information from multinational bank HSBC has shown that the Swiss bank helped 314 Danes conceal around 4.8 billion kroner from tax authorities. The data was originally leaked to the French government in 2009 by former HSBC IT worker Hervé Falciani. Soon after, the French authorities offered to share the list with a number of countries, including Denmark, but the Danish tax authorities failed to react. "Honestly, it is completely incomprehensible that the decision wasn't made to get the information when it was made available to other countries. It would have been the most normal thing to do," tax minister Benny Engelbrecht (S) told Politiken newspaper.

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Left gains, right wins
Danes approved of the PM's handling of February's terror attack – 72 percent of those asked in a Megafon poll responded that she did a 'good' or 'very good' job. It's good news for the PM in an election year, especially when the same poll found that 43 percent of Danes want her to keep her in the post, with only 34 percent preferring her main opponent, Lars Løkke Rasmussen.
It will be an uphill battle for Thorning-Schmidt, however. Another Megafon poll, from February 19, found that while the left wing parties gained some ground on the right wing, they would still only secure around 45 percent of the vote – far from the 50.2 percent that won them the election. The right wing currently stands at just under 55 percent of the vote.



Activity island
The fortress island Middelgrundsfortet has finally found a new owner, and with it a new sense of purpose. Under the guidance of the Danish Guide and Scout Association, a new fund will be established to turn the island into a unique activity centre.

SHELL BASE
Thule Air Base in Greenland was at the centre of a diplomatic disagreement between Denmark and the US last month when an American court ruled that American company Vectrus could take over the contract to service the base. A long-standing agreement between Danish and US authorities says that only Danish and Greenlandic companies can be contracted to service the American base. To circumvent the issue, Vectrus bid for the contract through a shell company it set up in Denmark called Exelis Service.
"I intend to express my concerns to the US so that Greenland, Denmark and the US can find a solution we can all be content with," Foreign Minister Martin Lidegaard told TV2.



Wikimedia Commons

DOCTOR DOUGH
Doctors at Odense University Hospital used research funding to buy everything from iPhones to bottles of Cava at restaurants, according to information acquired by TV2 News. Using these funds for personal purchases is a violation of research grant rules. The doctors seemed to be particular fans of Apple products. Collectively, they racked up a bill of over DKK 31,000 on various devices, of which only two have been accounted for.



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NEWSMAKER

REMEMBERING THE FALLEN

Last month's terrible attacks left us dumbfounded and sparked heated public debates about issues ranging from free speech to radicalisation. But while these might be important debates to have, they shouldn't overshadow the fact that it was primarily a human tragedy that took the lives of two innocent people

FINN NØRGAARD

It wasn't immediately clear why the attacker shot and killed Finn Nørgaard at close range outside the Krudttønden theatre. Inside, a debate was taking place about blasphemy, attended by controversial cartoonist Lars Vilks – Vilks was thought to be the attacker's target for his drawings of the Prophet Mohammed.

Eyewitness Clayton Coleman later said that Nørgaard tried to stop the attacker, and had wrestled with him as he shot into the building and at the three police officers.

"It looked like [Nørgaard] tried to grab his shoulders, but the assailant turned around and shot," Coleman told TV2 News.

This act of selfless heroism didn't surprise Nørgaard's friend Lars K. Andersen. In an obituary written the day after the attack, Andersen said that he couldn't let go of the thought that, "Finn had tried to stop the assailant."

Nørgaard was a well-known documentary filmmaker who founded his own company, Filmselskabet, in 2001, after more than a decade working for DR. In 2004, he directed the documentary *Boomerang-drengen*, about an Australian boy who wanted to become a world boomerang champion.

In 2009, he directed *En anden vej: Historien om fire nydanskere*, a TV2 documentary about four young immigrant boys with crim-



Finn Nørgaard (left) and Dan Uzan (right).

inal backgrounds that join businesswoman Stine Bosse on the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage.

On the website of the Danish Film Institute, director Henrik Bo Nielsen bid farewell to his colleague on behalf of the film industry.

"It is vital that directors take an active part in the social debate, and not just through their works ... That the consequence of taking part in a peaceful, democratic debate on art and freedom of speech on a Saturday afternoon in Copenhagen could be so final fills us with shock and anger."

Nørgaard was 55 years old.

DAN UZAN

Uzan was manning the door of the Copenhagen Synagogue late on Saturday night during a Bat Mitz-

vah celebration when the attacker shot him at point blank range. Uzan was active in the Jewish community and died because of his religious heritage.

He received a Master's degree in economics at the University of Copenhagen, and was an avid basketball player who had played for the Horsholm 79ers since 1996. While his mother was Danish, his father was from Israel, where Uzan lived for a time while he learned Hebrew.

Friends and family recount a man who was kind, helpful and loving.

"The most important thing for us is to tell people that Dan was wonderful, a wonderful man, friend and son. And it is completely devastating that he is no longer among us, it is such a loss for us

Peter Stanners



Det Mosaiske Trossamfund

all," his friend Tobias Kyhl-Nielsen told TV2 news.

In an emotional speech during Uzan's funeral, Denmark's chief Rabbi Jair Melchior had to pause several times as he shared his memories of the deceased.

"Everything he stood for, his joy, his love. The responsibility he always was willing to accept. Those things will always stay with us."

Uzan was 37 years old.

IN MEMORIAM

With an election planned for this year, their deaths will undoubtedly serve as the basis for arguments for political change, on both the right and left. But both Nørgaard and Uzan would be better remembered for why they died – in selfless attempts to protect other people. **M**

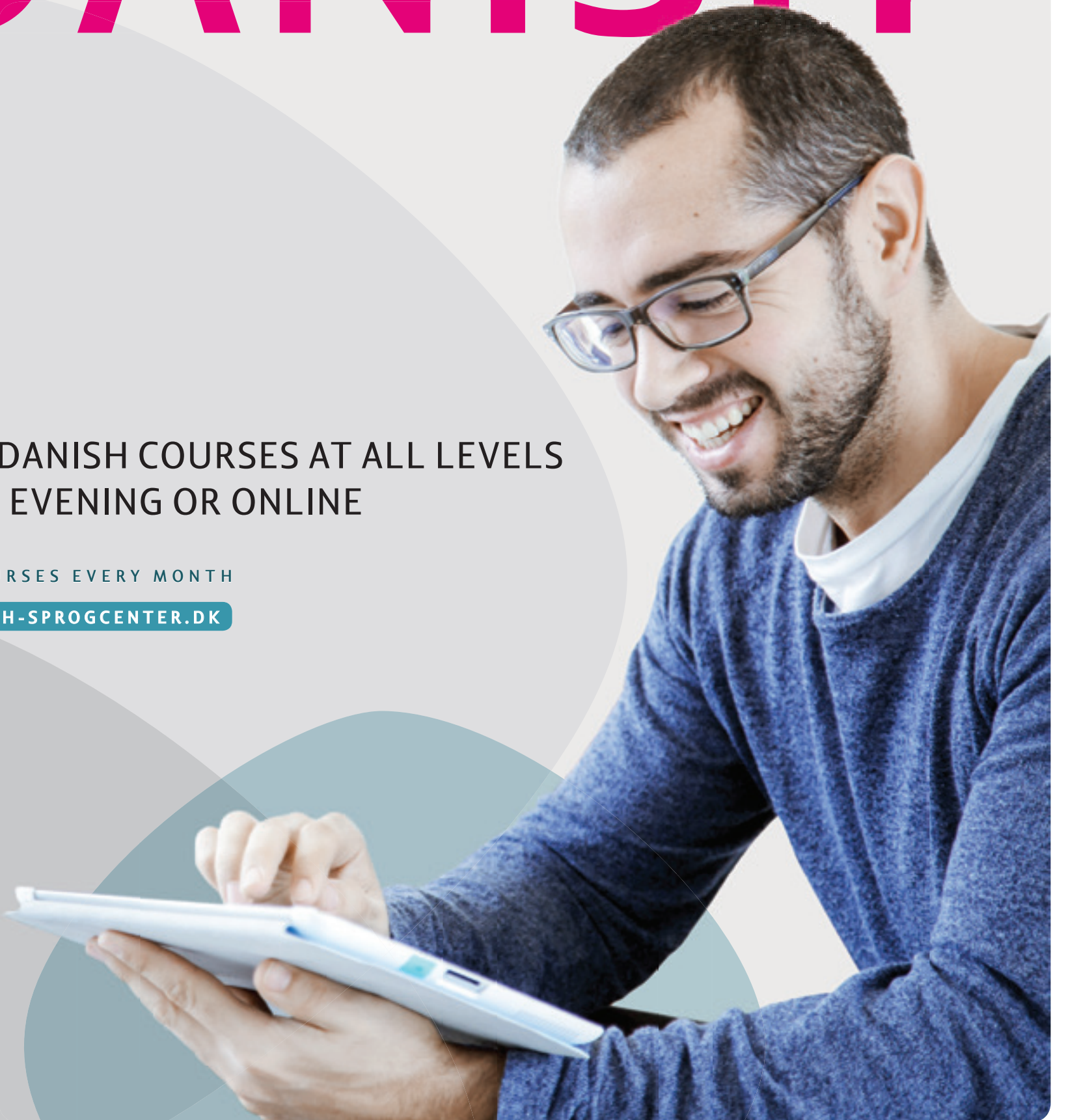
Elias Thorsson

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OBSERVED



LEARN ABOUT URBAN CULTURE

At The Murmur, we take a keen interest in the urban environment and what makes cities work. So we thought we'd give a shout-out to the Urban Culture in Theory and Action summer school programme that will take place this August. Hosted by the University of Copenhagen, the course will focus on cultural entrepreneurship and social innovation in the city, and how to combine urban theory with its practical application. The programme is intended to help students develop a do-it-yourself approach to urban culture.

The summer school will be tied in to the Strøm electronic music festival, and will make use of Copenhagen's many alternative spaces, especially the co-creative community PB43, which we wrote about in the last issue. The goal is to combine music, art and an innovative use of urban space to make students think inventively about the city. Furthermore, they hope to foster cross-cultural and global perspectives through presentations of research from Asia and the Middle East.

The programme is in English, and students from all over the world are encouraged to come, learn, and take their newfound knowledge back to their home cities.

<http://urban.tors.ku.dk/>

ANTI-BULLYING APP

Being bullied is one of the most horrifying experience a child can have. A big part of the problem is that kids feel unable to report bullying to their parents and school authorities. But now developer Todd Schobel has released StopIt!, an app that allows children to report bullies anonymously. Since its launch in August of last year, 78 schools in 13 US states have adopted the app, with Schobel hoping that the project can expand further.

<http://stopitcyberbully.com/>

Elias Thorsson

Clash of the elites

The agenda-setting cultural elite wandered into a fully fledged shitstorm last month following an interview with controversial poet Yahya Hassan in Politiken newspaper, in which he talked about violent responses to drawings of the prophet Mohammed. "The way I see it, that is a natural condition: artists have routinely, throughout history, been met with violence for criticising the people in power." This caused politicians, bankers and other pundits to showcase the true meaning of free speech by verbally tearing each other apart on social media. The rest of us sat back and watched the theatre of the absurd unfold.

HIGH THERE!

Does your ideal soulmate prefer long hours on the couch, rather than long walks in the woods? Or choose a bag of Doritos over a candlelight dinner? Has a date walked away when you started giggling while struggling to pronounce the word 'hors d'oeuvre'? These were all recurring problems for half-baked American entrepreneur Todd Mitchem, the creator of High There!, The first app designed for smokers and stoners, it allows them to avoid judgemental dates and instead direct them toward their one true bong mate. So go get high on love, while you are high.

<http://highthereapp.com>



THE MURMUR



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RESEARCH

BIOLOGICAL STOP WATCH

If you could be told how long you were likely to live, would you want to know? Researchers at the University of Edinburgh may have found a way to predict lifespan. The key is in that miraculous and miniscule double helix of biological information we call DNA.

A process called methylation takes place in our DNA, and by measuring how much has taken place, scientists think they may be able to predict a person's lifespan. Four independent studies followed 5,000 adults over a 14-year period. They found that individuals with faster than normal rates of methylation tended to die earlier. What is more interesting is that this remained true even when factoring in other conditions that we know affect life duration.

In other words, regardless of social and medical predictors of longevity (smoking, diabetes, heart conditions, education, social class, high blood pressure, IQ, etc.), higher methylation rates correlated strongly with a shortened lifespan. Consequently, measuring methylation levels could offer us a better basic predictor of human mortality. As the study says, "it may therefore be possible to think of [DNA] methylation-predicted age as a clock that runs alongside, but

not always in parallel with, biological age."

This discovery tells us more about what information our DNA holds as well as providing us with a new method for scientists and doctors to predict life expectancy.

COLD TURKEY IS A BAD IDEA

Most smokers quit their addictive tobacco products several times in their smoking lives. Some are so good at quitting, that they can do it three times in a month!

But what is it that makes quitting smoking so incredibly difficult? To find out, the Department of Neuroscience and Pharmacology at the University of Copenhagen recently conducted research on how the brain responds immediately after putting down the smokes.

Researchers followed 14 habitual smokers, nine men and five women between the ages of 22 and 33, who, aside from smoking, all had clean bills of health. Each participant was also a self-proclaimed morning smoker, smoking within an hour of waking. Researchers asked all 14 smokers to abstain from smoking for 12 hours.

In the morning, the partici-

pants' brains were scanned using PET to identify which areas of the brain are active.

One PET scan was performed upon arrival at 10am, which mapped the participants' brain activity while they were experiencing withdrawal. The participants were then allowed to smoke again. Three more PET scans were conducted 15, 60 and 105 minutes after smoking to observe changes in brain activity, if any, once nicotine had been reintroduced to the body.

What they found explains quite a bit. When habitual smokers were not allowed to have a cigarette, blood flow and oxygen to the brain decreased, in some cases up to 17 percent. According to study leader Albert Gjedde, this is comparable to a "dementia-like condition." After smoking a few cigarettes, participants' brain functionality returned to normal after around an hour and a half.

According to the study, nicotine increases brain activity by helping the brain to metabolise energy. With prolonged use, nicotine starts desensitising brain receptors, thereby increasing the brain's need for more nicotine. For chronic smokers, the absence of nicotine in the system makes it difficult for the brain to function optimally.



Quitting smoking can leave our brains temporarily starved of oxygen

Nereya Otieno

This explains why it is so incredibly hard for smokers to quit smoking – the brain underperforms in the absence of nicotine. The researchers therefore recommend that smokers gradually reduce their nicotine intake, as it is not only much easier and healthier for your brain, it also increases your chances of kicking the habit for good. **M**



"Everyone is Irish on St. Patrick's Day"

TUESDAY 17TH MARCH

Rådhuspladsen 15.30

A buzz of traditional Irish music & dance

Free St. Patrick's Day face paint for children.

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Parade 17.00

Start and finish at Rådhuspladsen (ca. 45 min.)
The requirement for participants: **Wear something green!**

/copenhagensepatricksdays

stpatricksdaysparade.dk





Peter Stanners

Police stand guard outside the theatre Krudttønden that is riddled with bullet holes following Omar El-Hussain's attack.

New surveillance laws trump the NSA

In the wake of the Copenhagen terror attack, the government presented twelve new ideas to combat terrorism. Critics argue, however, that the proposal is a knee-jerk reaction that gives too much power to the intelligence agencies

A billion kroner. This is the sum the Danish government has chosen to invest in anti-terror initiatives following the deaths of Finn Nørsgaard and Dan Uzan at the hands of Omar El-Hussain.

The 22-year-old was a career criminal who set out on his homicidal mission after declaring his allegiance to the Islamic State. Despite the weapons at his disposal – an automatic rifle and pistols – Nørsgaard and Uzan were the only people he managed to murder before police tracked him down and killed him in a shoot out near Nørrebro station.

"We want to protect our country and live safely," declared PM Helle Thorning-Schmidt at the press conference she called to present twelve new proposals to strengthen Denmark's anti-terror efforts.

Expected to cost 970 million kroner over four years, the proposals are based on recommendations from the security agencies that were solicited by the government following the Charlie Hebdo attacks in January.

In the proposal outlining their

When the criteria for suspicion are reduced without independent control, there is the risk of abuse

**JACOB MCHANGAMA,
DIRECTOR OF JUSTITIA**

Peter Stanners

12-point plan, the government says that the nature of the terror threat against Denmark has changed over the past decade. The first threat they identify is posed by Danes who return to Denmark with weapons training after fighting alongside groups like the Islamic State.

The second is that terror groups are becoming increasingly adept at using online propaganda to radicalise vulnerable individuals, inciting them to carry out terrorist attacks in their home countries. These "lone wolf" terrorists leave few traces, making them difficult to anticipate.

Finally, terror groups are increasingly resorting to encrypted communication tools, making it difficult for security agencies to listen in.

The enormous proposed investment would address these issues, with 200 million kroner going to improving the surveillance and preparedness capabilities of PET, the domestic intelligence agency. An upgrade of PET's IT analysis tools, costing 150 million kroner, will enable them to sift more efficiently through ever-larger quantities of

data. This will enable them to better identify threats via social media and video surveillance, for example.

The military intelligence agency FE will receive 415 million kroner, primarily to improve their ability to determine threats of terror from abroad, but also to increase their capacity to intercept digital information and break encryption. Encryption is proving particularly problematic, and FE will invest in cultivating their human intelligence assets to ensure a stream of information.

SNOOP WITHOUT A WARRANT

Despite receiving wide political support, elements of the government's plan were criticised for being too far-reaching. The government wants to let FE monitor the communications of Danes living abroad if they are suspected of involvement in terrorism, but without having to first apply for a warrant, as they do currently.

The warrants are designed to prevent the intelligence agencies from violating the civil liberties of Danes

through arbitrary surveillance. But allowing FE to snoop without a warrant gives them more extensive power than their equivalents in the UK (GCHQ) and the US (NSA), according to a report from the think tank Justitia.

"When the criteria for suspicion are reduced without independent control, there is the risk of abuse," warns Justitia director Jacob Mchangama in Politiken newspaper, adding that warrantless surveillance may also violate European human rights laws that guarantee an individual's right to privacy.

Far-left party Enhedslisten is also concerned that FE's new powers risk turning Denmark away from democracy and toward a police state.

"There is no evidence it will help prevent a new attack," their legal spokesperson Pernille Skipper told Politiko. "What will be the next idea? Will we start allowing them to put Danes inside Denmark under surveillance without a warrant? Or keep people detained without a judge's approval? Where do we draw the line?"

Kneejerk? The 12-point anti-terror package

The government's latest anti-terror package will cost 970 million kroner over four years. The twelve points are as follows:

1. 200 million kroner to develop the preparedness and surveillance capabilities of PET and the police.
2. 150 million kroner to increase the IT and analysis capabilities of PET and the police.
3. Expansion of PET's personal protection unit.
4. Access to relevant information about plane passengers.
5. Investigation of the possible registration of prepaid telephone card users.
6. 415 million kroner to the Defence Intelligence Agency for collecting and analysing information about foreign terror threats.
7. Increased efforts against Danish extremists living abroad.
8. Expanded operational preparedness of PET.
9. Increased preparedness of the National Police.
10. New initiatives to prevent radicalisation in prison.
11. Strengthened preventative efforts in the Middle East and North Africa.
12. Establishing of a committee to examine Denmark's anti-terror efforts.

Source: Statsministeriet

Defence minister Nicolai Wammen defended the proposal, pointing out that requests to monitor Danes abroad must be approved by the head of FE, as well as the intelligence agencies' oversight committee, TET.

"This proposal will allow us at a much earlier stage to gain access to information that can protect Denmark against potential terror attacks," Wammen told Politiko.

PRISON RADICALISATION

In December, El-Hussain was given a two-year sentence for stabbing a man on a train in 2013. He appealed and was released on January 30, after spending more than a year in jail on remand. While he was in jail he was radicalised, and sixteen days after his release, he carried out the attacks.

One of the government's twelve ideas is to tackle the type of radicalisation that El-Hussain experienced in jail. This builds on a 61 million kroner government initiative launched in January to tackle radicalisation and extremism.

In an editorial, the newspaper Information points out that there was nothing stopping the intelligence agencies from keeping El-Hussain under surveillance. The state prosecutor advised against his release in January, and the Prison Service warned that he had been radicalised.

"The government's anti-terror plan is clearly designed to give the population a feeling of security," they write. "We will get more control, registrations and surveillance. But in the process, we limit the

same personal freedoms that the politicians are trying to protect."

Politiken newspaper joined in the chorus, arguing that anti-radicalisation efforts need to start at a much younger age.

"The reflexive reaction that we can eradicate the terrorist threat by blindly throwing millions at the police and intelligence services is a typical mistake," Politiken writes.

The funding for the government's proposal will be secured during the next round of budget negotiations in the autumn. Most of the 970 million kroner will be found in future budgets, and so doesn't amount to much of an additional investment in the state's current budget.

The Conservative party argues that this is insufficient, and has proposed its own 3.4 billion kroner package that includes investing 500 million kroner per year in additional police officers. They also want to set aside funds for the permanent protection of the Jewish community, following the murder of Uzan outside the Copenhagen Synagogue.

"We have to accept that it appears that we have not adequately protected the Jewish community," Conservative leader Søren Pape told Politiko.

In the proposal, the government argues that the twelve points will help the country meet the terror threat it faces, but buried in the text is a careful disclaimer. "In the war against terror, we can never protect ourselves 100 percent. It is not possible, regardless of what we do. There will always be a risk that a fanatic will succeed in their attack." ■

IS LEARNING DANISH TOO BIG A CHALLENGE?



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Henrik Bohn Ipsen

The women featured in Plambeck's documentary 'Love on Delivery'. L-R: Mong, Basit, Sommai and Kae.

Migrating for sex, love and liberation

INTERVIEW Anthropologist Sine Plambeck reveals the raw strength and fragility of women who move to Denmark for work in the sex industry – or the rare prize of a husband

"I became quite close to a young girl who was a sex worker in Pattaya, and she revealed to me one day that she was pregnant," Professor Sine Plambeck tells me in her office, recounting a moving experience during her research in Thailand.

"Abortions there are expensive - not to mention illegal - so she asked me to arrange and pay for it. When it was done, I offered to pay her so she could rest - but the very next day she was back at work servicing clients. It's a truly surreal world to be involved in when you see how these women have so few choices and receive so little compassion."

Plambeck is a researcher, an-

Sex work per se isn't always the problem, for many it's the solution

Lesley Price

thropologist and filmmaker who has come closer to the industry of sex and love than most of us would care to. She has been a passenger on hundreds of emotional journeys, and is now a pioneer in sharing the stories of these women, in hope of generating a broader understanding and acceptance of their work.

Plambeck says it was her very liberal background that instilled in her the values of feminism from an early age.

"Curiosity drove me to start asking these questions," she explains. "I've always been interested in the lives of women and our progress in the world."

Plambeck is best known for

the research and anthropological work into the migration patterns of Thai women who had moved to the small North Jutland town Thy in pursuit of love and stability.

The work formed the foundation of the award-winning 2008 documentary *Fra Thailand Til Thy (Love on Delivery)*, directed by Janus Metz. The documentary follows the journey of a young woman named Kae, who travels to Denmark to join a group of well-integrated Thai women who successfully help her find a Danish husband.

DIGNITY AND AGENCY

Last year, Plambeck directed *Becky's Journey*, the harrow-

ing story of a 26-year-old Nigerian woman who moves to Italy in search of a better life, only to end up in the sex industry.

In one of the film's most memorable moments, Becky explains that she was more than willing to engage in prostitution as the price of a happy ending. Plambeck says Becky's story is actually rather typical for thousands of people who migrate to Europe.

"I don't like to use the term prostitute, I don't like that it sounds as if the sex-worker has no agency at all," she says.

Although many of the women engage knowingly with the sex industry, Plambeck says most would have chosen a different path if they

felt they had real and sustainable alternatives.

"They have dignity, agency and a strong perspective on what they do."

Plambech has expert knowledge in a range of controversial areas, including the Danish sex industry, sex tourism in Thailand, Nigeria and Spain, transnational marriages in Denmark, and human trafficking. As a result, she is a respected voice in the media on the subject of women's welfare, and currently works for the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS).

When in Denmark, Plambech carries out most of her fieldwork in Northern Jutland and in Vesterbro's red light district. Her objectives are to assess how the women she studies live, and whether their migration to Denmark has been marked more by promise – or problems.

According to the SFI (The Danish National Centre for Social Research), approximately 3,000 men and women worked in the sex trade between July 2012 and June 2013. It is estimated that around half are foreigners. Of the approximately 600 foreign women working the streets, 50 percent derive from Central and Eastern Europe, and another large percentage from Africa, particularly Nigeria. The largest single nationality among foreign sex workers, however, is Thai.

DIFFERING CIRCUMSTANCES

According to Plambech, the majority of women working in the industry are here temporarily, usually coming to Denmark on a three-month tourist visa before returning with their earnings to their families.

"A few also come from unsuccessful marriages to Danes, and have had to find a way to support themselves," she adds.

There are also those who choose to stay illegally. Their circumstances are much more dire – for them, going home is usually a highly unattractive option.

"Some women from Nigeria, for example, arrive on a valid visa, but once it expires and they have no means of obtaining another, they simply go underground and continue to work," she explains, adding that some are also trafficked into the country.

A significant issue covered in Plambech's research is the assessment of women who are deport-

ed back to their home nations when they have been caught residing without legal paperwork in Denmark. Her PhD-Thesis argues that many Nigerian women, which are repatriated, some after being judged to be working against their will, suffer from the experience, as they lose their source of income.

Repatriation policies do not consider these social impacts, Plambech argues, adding that the definition of 'trafficking' has become increasingly blurred over the past few years. She also believes that some common misconceptions about the Danish sex industry need to change.

"We often have this rather condescending view of these women because they're selling sex," she says. "But for many it's just work. Of course, not any kind of work, it is very tough and exhausting – but it doesn't always raise the moral implications that we would imagine."

Plambech also explains that many women end up mired in debt after arriving in Denmark, often owing to the cost of their journey. The sex industry is sometimes their ticket to freedom.

"Sex work per se isn't always

the problem, for many it's the solution. Through all the years I've spent working with these women, I've met many who were, despite their difficult situations, independent and trying to do business."

A BETTER FUTURE

Plambech has also worked extensively in Pattaya, Thailand, in Barcelona, and in Benin City and Lagos, Nigeria. She explained that fieldwork in the home nations of these women is crucial to developing an informed understanding of the big issues behind migration.

"Spending time with these women in their homes gives me a richer sense of their experiences, particularly their reasons for moving and their life ambitions. It has also led to some really valuable personal relationships. I truly enjoy being around these women – they know how to have a good time, they're honest and incredibly strong."

Despite how moving and inspirational she finds them, Plambech says that she often finds herself in confrontational and heartbreaking situations with the women. Like her friend in Pattaya, difficult

I don't like to use the term prostitute, I don't like that it sounds as if the sex-worker has no agency at all

abortions cases aren't uncommon. She explained that she knew of another woman who had to wait until she was five months pregnant before she could afford to terminate the pregnancy.

"So often you see these women fighting to obtain better lives but having to face one inhuman and degrading experience after another: rape, abuse, divorce from their children and loved ones to name but a few," she explains.

Her studies in Nigeria have also revealed that some women are brought to Europe under false pretences, such as the promise of a job.

"I've met so many young women from Lagos who had the same aspirations for their lives as I did," she says. "It's crushing that the opportunities are so limited for them and that their dreams will probably never come to fruition."

It may be difficult to understand, Plambech shares a distinctive optimism with many of the women she has come to know in the sex industry. They deserve our respect rather than our pity, she argues, for choosing to leave their troubled or unfruitful backgrounds in search of a safer or more promising future. **M**



Lars Skree

Sex workers in Thailand who are featured in 'Ticket to Paradise' the sequel to 'Love on Delivery', also directed by Janus Metz.



A render of proposed changes to the Sundholmsvej District. The project is now drawing to a close.

Breathing life into neglected communities

Local residents are helping the city renew their neighbourhoods and, in the process, increasing Copenhagen's social capital

A place to call your own is hard to find in Copenhagen. The population is rising, and prices are going up. You move from the City to Vestrebro, then Nørrebro, and then Valby. You move further from the city centre, and the soaring prices keep up.

But beyond the rapidly-accelerating traditional housing market, there are homes that are less marketable. They exist in neighbourhoods that haven't yet seen their first bistro or coffee shop. The apartments are small and deteriorating, and still without adequate sanitation.

Long-term residents have left for better-equipped housing, and in their place come transient stu-

We take a map of the area and ask, where do you think it is safe?

**METTE DYBKJÆR,
URBAN RENEWAL
OFFICE**

Liam Duffy

dents with little interest in investing. In the process, communities fall apart.

But since the late 1990s, some of these neighbourhoods have had their public spaces transformed, turning their streets into a place the residents can call their own.

This redevelopment is the result of the Copenhagen City Council's 'områdefornyelse' projects. Literally meaning 'area renewal', the focus is not on creating new buildings as this tends to attract new investment and residents from outside the communities.

The projects instead focus on reviving neighbourhoods for the residents that already live there. Instead of knocking down homes and

building new ones, the council retrofits existing structures, installing bathrooms and showers in apartments for residents that previously had to use common facilities, for example. But there's more to it than that.

"The issues we have in these areas are related not only to their physical design," explains Line Jensen Buch from the Urban Renewal Office in the city council's Technical and Environmental Administration. "Much of the purpose of urban renewal is to create more trust and feelings of safety, and increase social capital."

REBUILD AND RENEW

Mette Dybkjær, a special consult-

ant in the Urban Renewal Office, recommends which areas of the city will be addressed next. New areas undergo a thorough analysis after consulting professionals, service providers, residents and others using the area.

"We take a map of the area and ask, where do you think it is safe? Which parts do you like, and which parts don't you like? Which parts do you use, and which don't you use? What do you need that you don't have? What is the character of the area? What do you want us to do?" Dybkjær explains.

The responses don't always give a clear picture, however, and tend to be as diverse as the people who live and use the area. Requests of-

ten conflict with each other, or are even contradictory in nature.

"People tend to ask for a greener city. But while they want fewer cars, some of them still want more parking. That doesn't fit very well together. In a lot of places, residents are afraid about the local shops closing down, so they ask us to help them stay and survive. But, on the other hand, many people are also shopping in larger shops and on the internet," Dybkjær says.

The most visible projects tend to centre on public and green spaces, and are designed using methods that exercise local empowerment and identity, which Dybkjær argues pays off in the long run.

"The spaces are more unique because they are developed together with the citizens. They therefore take a greater sense of ownership over these new spaces."

Despite the focus on inclusiveness, it is often necessary to segregate different groups in public spaces because their needs and behaviour conflict.

"Alcoholics can sometimes be problematic in communities if they choose to sit and make noise into the night near other residents. It can make children feel unsafe. So we try and find space for them, an area in the square where they can be. We don't want to get rid of them, rather we want to find a way that allows them to stay, but also allows other people to enjoy the square."

SUNDHOLMSVEJ

You can find one of these segregated areas for alcoholics in the Sundholm District, a mix of social and private housing that is nestled between Amagerbrogade and the University of Copenhagen's Faculty of Humanities.

The renewal project in the district started around six years ago and has included repurposing the old central laundry facility into the Fabrikken for Kunst og Design (FKD) – 'the Factory of Art and Design'. With a focus on outreach, professional artists and designers work in its 50 studios and invite in local school children and international artists alike, for workshops, exhibitions and residencies.

Øystein Leonardsen, the Sundholm renewal project director, has overseen the opening of cooperatively designed green spaces, the development of ur-

ban gardens, the painting of public murals, the opening of a community centre, and the installation of solar panels on FKD, whose excess power is shared with nearby housing. All the initiatives were guided by the district's users and residents.

"We are reintroducing the commons, the place in the village without a single owner, that can be enjoyed by the entire community," says Leonardsen.

While he works together with architects, sociologists, and economists, he emphasises that the needs of residents and users are kept in mind while they develop the commons. He believes that during the process they learn from each other, and get increasingly better at working together.

The people responsible for renewing Copenhagen seem to be grounded in professional self-awareness. They balance their own vision for these neighbourhoods against the needs of the residents and the city, and empower locals to bring their ideas to the table. After all, the locals are the ones that have to live with the finished results.

"We have to balance what the people want, what the municipality wants, and what, with our knowledge and professional experience, we think would be good," Dybkjær says.

Leonardsen argues that the results of the renewal projects are ultimately related to the degree to which locals involve themselves in the process.

"If you don't want to make a change, it won't happen," he stresses.

Buch, from the Urban Renewal Office, says they often encounter residents that fear the renewal programmes are the first stage of a gentrification process, which will ultimately marginalise them further.

"Many people react with resistance, saying we don't want to be gentrified, we don't want to be like Vesterbro, we don't want to have a rich area," says Buch.

But the worry might be a little misplaced. The new green spaces and stronger communities that result from the projects do not change the social makeup, levels of poverty and sense of marginalisation of these areas. These might be the changes that are needed, however, before the residents can take the reins and lift their neighbourhoods from the inside out. **M**



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Tunnel to a new beginning

A brisk wind ripples the surface of the harbour. Elderly men loiter, nodding as they pass each other. It's past midday, yet the town is only just waking up. The 'For Sale' signs that scream at you from building to building are suddenly drowned out by the shriek of a car alarm. When it stops, the signs continue competing for no one's attention.

"There were once 20 fishing boats in the harbour, their masts stood like a forest. Now there are only two," says Hans Erik Kristiansen.

The 80-year-old returns his gaze to the sea.

Words:
Susan Daniels &
Peter Stanners

Photos + additional
reporting:
Rasmus Degnbol

"The tunnel will be good. It's completely dead here."

Kristiansen lives in Rødbyhavn on the island of Lolland, a town of around 1,700. Thousands more pass through, but few stop. From the harbour, Scandlines ferries transport trains and vehicles to Puttgarden, Germany. Even with the wait at the harbour, it's the fastest route from Copenhagen to Hamburg – around 4.5 hours by car.

The tunnel Kristiansen refers to – the Fehmarn Fixed Link – will make the journey even faster. Drivers will shave 45 minutes off the trip to Hamburg, while train travellers will arrive in a speedy three hours – 90 minutes faster than they do now.

The tunnel will run parallel to the current ferry route and, if construction gets underway this year, will be completed in 2021. Crews will dredge the sea and sink 79 slabs of concrete, each over 200 metres long, into the sea floor. A factory to the east of Rødbyhavn will cast one concrete element in an enormous production line, employing 3,000 people.

While the factory jobs will inject life into the local economy during the construction period, there are hopes that the tunnel will bring a longer-lasting economic revival to the area. Lolland's population declined by more than 10 percent between 2004 and 2014, to around 61,000 residents. Most of the em-

igrants are young people like Simone and Iben, who are waiting for a bus in the neighbouring town Rødby in their matching fur-trimmed parkas.

"It's boring here, no parties and nothing to do," says Simone. It's not surprising then, that the average age on the island has risen from 44 to 47 over the past decade.

NOTHING TO DO

When The Murmur visited this winter, it was easy to understand how the two teenagers felt. Closed shops lined the high street in Rødby, and few sources of entertainment could be found. In one of the surviving shops, Brigitte Wager sells supplies for knitting and em-



In southern Lolland, a vast engineering project is expected to get underway later this year. But while the 18-kilometre Fehmarn Fixed Link to Germany could revive the local economy, residents are apprehensive and wary about whether the tunnel will mean a brighter future



Hans Erik Kristiansen is hopeful about the opportunities the tunnel may bring.

broidery. An artist and writer originally from Austria, she moved to Lolland with her Danish husband in 1978.

"It wasn't easy. It took some time to get to know the locals," she admits.

She and her husband divorced, and she now lives in an 18th-century house that she restored with her new partner. Being a German speaker, she was able to strike up a relationship with artists across the strait, and hopes the tunnel will increase collaboration.

"People with similar professions should get better at working together across borders, to exchange experiences and ideas," she says.

The tunnel will be good. It's completely dead here

HANS ERIK KRISTIANSEN



The Scandlines ferry to Puttgarden heads into harbour at Rødbyhavn.

She belongs to the tourism network 'Den Lille Turisme' (The Little Tourism) that links attractions across the islands of Lolland and Falster. She thinks the islands have a number of unique attractions that can draw visitors, such as fossil hunting, local birdlife, and the cycle paths atop the dykes that protect around 60 kilometres of the coast.

Down the road from Brigitte's shop is Rødby Church, which was built when the town was a trading post on the shores of Rødby Fjord. But while the sea inlet brought merchants to the small town, it also allowed a three-metre storm surge to penetrate and almost completely flood the island

I have a positive attitude toward life – I have faith in the future

JENS, LALANDIA SUPERMARKET MANAGER



in 1872, killing 28. Following the disaster, the fjord was progressively drained, and a pumping station still removes 20 cubic metres of water a second from the low-lying area behind the dykes.

After Rødby lost its sea access, a new harbour town was built on the coast in 1912 – Rødbyhavn. But the new town struggled, and was put into administration by the state for 30 years after its shipyard closed shortly after opening.

The town's fortunes improved when the ferry to Puttgarden opened in 1963. Perhaps the most important moment in its commercial history, however, was the opening of the waterpark Lalandia in 1988 to the west of the town.

Around 500,000 visitors come each year, and locals enjoy the facilities too.

CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM

Sasha Lindgren, Camilla Rasmussen and Julie Aabern are out on Lalandia's ice skating rink. They are students at Nysted Efterskole, about 20 kilometres away, and visit often.

"It's really relaxing living down here. I like it, I don't need to party all the time," says Camilla. She adds that her family all live nearby, so she will probably stay on the island when she's finished her education. Her friends are less sure.

Lalandia has around 700 holiday homes that it rents to tourists, who

are then given access to all of Lalandia's facilities – everything from waterslides and heated outdoor swimming to bowling and miniature golf. Its supermarket is managed by Jens, a middle-aged man with a background in wine trading, who has a far more optimistic outlook on Rødbyhavn's future than some of his neighbours.

"What I don't like so much here is the negative attitude among some people. They see only limitations and the dark side of things," he says. "I have a positive attitude toward life – it's no use sitting down and crying, there is a lot to be grateful for. I have faith in the future, and when it comes to the big Fehmarn tunnel project, it is only the



Sasha Lindgren, Camilla Rasmussen and Julie Aabern at the Lalandia iceskating rink.



Simone and Iben at the Rødby bus station.

imagination that sets limits. There are many opportunities for companies to establish themselves here and create more jobs, but sometimes the political system and civil servants slow matters down."

Lalandia also seems excited by the opportunity that the tunnel presents, and has dedicated a section of its website to outlining the services it can provide during and after the tunnel's construction.

There is much that can go wrong before ground is broken, however. In February, contractors returned quotes for building the tunnel at around 64 billion kroner, around nine billion kroner higher than originally expected. EU funding that is expected to cover around 18 percent of the cost may al-

It's really relaxing living down here. I like it, I don't need to party all the time

CAMILLA RASMUSSEN



An asylum seeker smokes a hookah outside the centre he is housed in.



Rødby high street where many shops have closed in recent years.



Birgitta Ragnarsdotter in her shop.

so be in jeopardy, while the ferry company Scandlines has threatened to sue a German consulting company whose traffic prognosis was used to support the case for a fixed link. German activists have also criticised the tunnel proposal for its potential environmental impact.

Despite these setbacks, the Danish government is committed to the project and expects the tunnel to generate a net social benefit of 28 billion kroner over 50 years.

DRIVERS WILL PASS BY

Birgitta Ragnarsdotter says she's heard it all before. Now 72 and owner of a second-hand shop in Rødby, she lived in Malmö with

her husband while the Øresund Bridge was being built.

"All of the considerations and arguments and scepticism, it's exactly the same, nothing is different," she says.

She and her husband moved to the town in 1996, rather by coincidence. After selling their home in Sweden, they decided to drive into Denmark and head south to find a new town to settle in, but their car broke down as they were passing through Copenhagen.

While they waited for the car to be repaired, they visited her sister in Rødby – and never left.

"I look forward to the tunnel opening, hopefully it will bring life to the area," she says.

But if drivers choose not to stop, the tunnel might bring little extra life. Neither Ralf nor Tina Ludvigsen from Skørtinge, around seven kilometres from Rødby, think the tunnel will improve long-term job prospects in the region.

They feel that if the government and local authorities want to improve the island's economy, they need to take affirmative action.

"Initiative should be taken to get more businesses to establish themselves here, and more government agencies should be placed in areas like Lolland. I have to work in Næstved, which suits me, but I would not be able



Inside the holiday waterpark Lalandia.



A restaurant in Lalandia.



One of the surviving shops in Rødby.



Rita and Yvonne in a charity shop in Rødbyhavn.



Birgitte Wager in her shop.

to find a similar job locally," says Ralf, after attending a parents' meeting for his teenage son at Rødby school.

"More jobs in offices could be set up here if the internet and mobile coverage were improved. It should not be necessary to go to Copenhagen to work in an office."

They have watched cuts to public services affect the quality of treatment that the local elderly receive, while after-school programmes for youth have also been cut, meaning that their children need to be driven further afield. Neither policy encourages residents to stay.

Some residents don't have a choice about living in Rødbyhavn. Two hundred asylum seekers are

housed in the town and are a frequent topic of conversation.

Rita and Yvonne, who volunteer in a charity shop in the town, aren't happy about it. They think that there are too many asylum seekers for the size of the town, especially after a spate of thefts.

But they're not the only ones upset about the crime. Muhammed Maree, from Syria, says that he and fellow asylum seekers helped identify the culprits. But their greater problem is isolation from the locals.

"We have no contact with the local population, only with the staff at the centre. We receive Danish lessons twice a week to learn the basics, but I would especially like

to know more about Danish culture and society – not least the cultural codes of everyday life," Oday says. "There is no community spirit here. Someone should invite everyone in Rødbyhavn to a big gathering."

Hairdresser Karina understands what they mean.

"In some ways, most people keep to themselves, but there is still an open and pleasant atmosphere among locals," she says.

Except for one year in Copenhagen, Karina lived her entire life in Rødby before moving to the neighbouring harbour town to work at the hairdresser's. "I like the quiet pace here and would not want to move away. My family and friends are here."

More jobs in offices could be set up here if internet and mobile coverage were improved

RALF LUDVIGSEN

She plays handball at the local club, which is popular with most residents, including 13-year-old Sarah.

"Rødbyhavn is really boring. Besides handball, there are no activities, and in general there are not many in the town our age. Of course there's Lalandia, but it's expensive," she explains, on her way home from handball practice.

"I want the ferries to continue, because otherwise my mum will lose her job – she works for Scandlines," she says. "And anyways, travelling through a tunnel will just be boring." **M**

Some interviewees preferred not to supply their full names.



Rødbyhavn.



Karina cutting a man's hair in Rødbyhavn.

The funniest most dangerous place in the world

A bus full of tourists goes to the Demilitarized Zone to see the bizarre stand-off as the 50-year-old Korean War still festers



Inside one of the negotiation huts at Panmunjom. The South Korean soldier, or "rock" as they are known, is standing on the North Korean side of the hut.



The viewing platform at the Dora observatory, looking out over the DMZ towards the North.

The South Korean soldier that just stepped onto our bus is a pimply teenager with dark aviator sunglasses and an unflinching expression.

"They're called the 'rocks'," our tour guide had told us a few minutes earlier.

"In Korea we still have national service. The tallest, best looking soldiers are assigned to work at the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), where they stand strong and stony-faced to show the North Koreans how mighty and good looking we are in the South. But some of them are better looking than others."

As the soldier passes the guide and checks our passports, she makes a thumbs-down sign behind

his back and grimaces as though he smelled bad. She is clearly unimpressed.

So starts my day trip into the heart of the Korean conflict – an experience comical to the point of farce, yet with an ever-present sense of cataclysmic danger. After all, the two Koreas are technically still at war, and often act like it.

PERMANENT STANDOFF

The DMZ is their border, established by the 1953 armistice agreement. Despite the ceasefire, the strip of land that splits the Korean peninsula in two – 250 kilometres long and four kilometres wide – remains the most-heavily militarised border in the world. Most

of the DMZ is forbidden to people, and is riddled with landmines, trenches and secret tunnels. It's also one of Asia's most pristine nature reserves.

On each side, hundreds of thousands of troops stand permanently ready for action, taunting each other at every opportunity. It could all go wrong at any moment. And I'm sitting on a bus full of tourists on their way to shoot videos on their iPads of a place that could well be the site of nuclear apocalypse. Surreal doesn't even begin to cut it.

If you're neither a soldier nor suicidal, the only way in or out of the DMZ is on this bus. When I bought the ticket two days earlier, I was told to dress 'appropriately'

Whose bloody idea was it to let 100,000 tourists into this place every year?

Words + photos
Alastair Philip Wiper

– no sleeveless shirts, collarless t-shirts, short pants or skirts, sandals, military-looking clothes, or t-shirts with a flag or nationality printed on it. On the bus, we are told that the North Koreans will be watching and photographing us, and if they spot someone that looks like a hippie, they will use it as propaganda against the South. Fair enough.

Indeed, appearances count for a lot in the DMZ. In 1980, the South Koreans erected a flagpole 98.4 metres tall to fly the South Korean flag on their side of the DMZ. In what has become known as the "Flagpole War", the North Koreans then erected a 160-metre flagpole in retaliation.



Still towering over the trees and hills, the flagpoles were erected in the only two towns that remain in the DMZ. The Northern village, Kijong-dong, is officially a 200-family collective farm, whose inhabitants enjoy brightly coloured apartment buildings, a hospital, kindergartens and schools. Closer scrutiny has revealed that they are nothing more than uninhabited, windowless concrete shells, lit by lights on timers.

The South Korean village is Deaseong-dong, otherwise known as "Freedom Village". It has an actual human population that is drawn to the village by tax exemption and military conscription. While the village's farmers are some of the wealthiest in South Korea – DMZ produce is considered to be very high-quality – the population is steadily declining, as the only new residents allowed are women who marry resident men.

RISK OF INJURY AND DEATH

Our bus sets out early in the morning, cutting through the smog as we head north from the South Korean capital, Seoul. Our first stop is Imjingak Park, a few hundred metres from the DMZ border, which serves as a site of mourning for families divided by the Korean War. It's now decorated like a funfair, with trophy tanks and planes left over from the war alongside a huge car park.

We continue through several

Do not make eye contact with the Northern side. Do not gesture to the Northern side, even if they provoke you. Be on your best behaviour

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE TOUR GUIDE

checkpoints – including the one with the pimply teenager – into the DMZ and arrive at the site of the "Third Tunnel of Aggression". Discovered in 1978 thanks to intelligence supplied by a North Korean defector, it is the third of four tunnels dug by the North to facilitate an invasion. It was only 44 kilometres from Seoul when it was discovered, and could have let in 30,000 troops per hour.

"Now that the North knows we have turned the tunnel into a tourist attraction, they have asked for a share in the ticket price because they built it," our guide says.

But these stops merely whet the appetite for the trip's main course – a journey into the heart of the DMZ, the Joint Security Area. It is the only section of the DMZ where North and South Korean soldiers face each other. Straddling the demarcation line are two blue huts where official negotiations between the two sides take place. Before we are let in, we have to sign a document affirming that we understand we are entering a hostile area that might entail "possibility of injury or death as a direct result of enemy action". Just like that time I went bungee jumping.

This place, the epicentre of the Korean conflict, has seen its fair share of comedy and horror. Over 750 acts of violence have been documented here, from North Korean defectors running over the demar-

cation line and starting shootouts, to brutal axe murders. Then there were the schoolyard tactics employed in the early days. Once, the night before talks were to be held, South Koreans sneaked into the meeting room and sawed down the legs of the chairs assigned to the North Korean delegates, causing them to sit lower and lose face.

A LINE ON THE FLOOR

"You must do exactly what we say, and what the soldiers say. Do not make eye contact with the Northern side. Do not gesture to the Northern side, even if they provoke you. Be on your best behaviour," we are sternly warned by the guide.

In silence, we shuffle off the bus and into the "Home of Freedom", the imposing building on the South Korean side of the JSA. Emerging on the other side, we face the blue negotiation huts and the line passing through the middle of them. Three "rocks" stand rigidly on duty and stare their bad vibes into Panmun Hall, the equally imposing North Korean building on the other side.

After a couple of minutes observing the scene, my 40-odd companions and myself are shown into one of the blue huts. A line runs down the middle, dividing the two Koreas. This is the bit where you say, "Look, I'm in North Korea! Look, now I'm in South Korea!" and then have the barely credible right to brag to everyone back

home about how you went to North Korea on your holiday.

From here, we are shuffled back onto the bus, and after a brief stop to look out the window at the Bridge of No Return – the site of the infamous 1976 Axe Murder Incident – we are cruising down the motorway on our way back to Seoul, unsure if what we just saw was actually real, or just a tour of a highly realistic film set.

One question I can't help asking myself is, whose bloody idea was it to let 100,000 tourists into this place every year, and how did they pull it off? But I'm glad they did, because it provides a strange glimpse into one of the world's most bizarre conflicts. These two countries might have the world's most ethnically similar populations, but the stories we hear of life in the North seem to have little in common with the enthusiastic, future-ready culture of the South.

"People often ask us if we want to be reunited with the North," our guide says as she finishes up the tour.

"They all expect us, and want us, to say yes. But in truth, I think the answer for most people is no. Of course we want this aggression and division to stop. But we have lived too differently for too long, and becoming one country again now would be almost impossible, and too difficult for most of us here to be bothered with." **M**

If you're
neither a
soldier nor
suicidal, the
only way in
or out of
the DMZ is
by bus



Previous page: Left, the Memorial at Imjingak.
Right, tanks used during the war are put on display.

Right: Ribbons for peace and re-unification at
Imjingak Park.

Below: The view from South Korea to North Korea
at Panmunjom, the only point in the DMZ
where the two sides meet. The concrete slabs
in the middle of the huts mark the border between
the two Koreas, and the blue buildings are where
negotiations are held.





Peter Stanners

Nanna Gottfredsen has worked with street people for many years, and now helps ensure their legal rights are protected.

The outlaws' attorney

When you're marginalised and disenfranchised, you need someone to help fight your corner – meet Copenhagen's street lawyers

The cold stings my hands as I approach the side entrance to Copenhagen Central Station. It's known locally as the 'Big Pharmacy', and it's where drug users and pushers have been bartering pills and prescriptions for decades.

On this cold winter day, however, the huddled group is gathered for another reason. Two well-dressed young people hand out coffee, cigarettes and cakes from a cargo bike to local homeless and drug users. These are no ordinary social workers – these are street lawyers.

"You have to meet Krøl, he is wonderful," says Nanna Gotfredsen, referring to an elderly homeless man with a friendly, small black Labrador. Krøl seems to be in bad shape, and Gotfredsen tells me he was recently attacked on the streets.

"Here you go Krøl, this is your new computer," she tells him as her co-worker Filip Soos swings a computer bag around Krøl's shoulder. "We don't really hand out computers every day, but Krøl is so wonderful, and he needs it."

Gotfredsen has an easy-going charm that permeates everything she says. She is a co-founder of Gadejuristen, the street lawyers who give legal advice to the people that live outside of traditional society – the homeless, the streetwalkers and the drug users.

THE EARLY DAYS

The initiative started in 1999, when Gotfredsen was a young law student. She was passionate about helping people, and realised that many were in need of legal assistance.

"I was volunteering in a church in Vesterbro that provides coffee and a warm place to people with difficulties. Many were burdened by legal issues that were actually quite easy to solve, so I started helping them out."

Gadejuristen received no official support in its first four years, relying entirely on the dedication of its volunteers. But in 2003, the organisation was awarded financial support from the government, allowing them to hire staff and grow.

The lawyers of Gadejuristen were immediately welcomed by the people they set out to help. They ensured that people received the benefits they were entitled to, and they helped facilitate an improved relationship with the police.

Their success is in large part due to the fact that they conduct their work out in the streets,

and don't operate out of institutionalised buildings that can seem a million miles away from their clients' familiar environment.

"We wanted everything to feel inviting, which is why we started bringing coffee and cakes along. But the main point was to meet people in their environment – where they are, where they live."

The legal and support environment for the socially marginalised was very different in the early days of Gadejuristen. The needle exchange was only open one hour a day, and certain areas of the city were designated 'forbidden zones' where the police could fine people for simply being 'unwelcome'. Unsurprisingly, she says some of the cases she has dealt with have involved police brutality.

"Vesterbro was divided into several forbidden zones, which were only enforced against the socially marginalised, who were hit with fines upwards of 600 kroner. These people couldn't pay, so many of them ended up in prison as the fines just kept growing. Even though we managed to get rid of the zones in 2012, there are many people who still owe these fines."

Navigating the complex jungle of bureaucracy and laws can be tricky for anyone, but as her colleague Soos explains: "You only need rights when they are being violated."

Most of us can go through life without having a confrontation with the law, or having to deal with a faceless social system. But if you exist on the fringes of society, lack financial power, and face prejudice from all levels of the state it becomes vital to have someone in your corner.

THE STORY OF MARTIN

On this freezing day on Istedgade, there seems to be no end to people who want to come and express their gratitude to Gotfredsen. One is Martin, a well-dressed young man with a Canadian father and Danish mother, who has lived in Denmark for the past four years.

"My parents divorced when I was fifteen, and my mom moved back to Denmark. Later my father died, and that is when I started taking drugs. My Canadian family was scattered all over the country, so I didn't really have anyone. I decided to move to Denmark to be with my family and get clean, but I realised that you can't run from your addiction."

Martin had developed a heroin addiction and

There seems to be this idea that because you are in the drug scene, you have signed away all your rights

FILIP SOOS

Elias Thorsson

wanted to move onto the methadone, which many addicts are prescribed by the healthcare system to safely manage their addiction. Frustratingly, he was met with a system unwilling to listen or help.

"I was living with my mom in this small town west of Copenhagen, and the local doctor refused to give me methadone. He kept prescribing me the drug suboxone, but it was making me ill and he wouldn't listen. So I started going into town to buy methadone on the streets."

The street price of methadone is considerably higher than the prescription price, so Martin began running up debt. Much of his addiction was financed with money from his mother, who sunk herself into debt as her son's problems deepened. It is with evident remorse that he admits the bill is now well over 100,000 kroner.

But last year, with Gadejuristen's help, Martin's life took a turn.

"You know, Nanna is a powerful woman," he tells me with a smile. "Last year I discovered Gadejuristen and I told them about my situation, and that my doctor was refusing to prescribe me the methadone I needed. So Gotfredsen wrote me a letter to give to my doctor telling him to give me methadone. The letter made the doctor finally give in. I think he was afraid of what she might do. She thinks he is doing something illegal."

Martin has now managed to find his feet again, and he proudly informs me that Nanna and his mother are Facebook friends. Gadejuristen's work doesn't end with paperwork and office hours, it seems.

Martin's story is not unique, and there is no shortage of people who sing Gadejuristen's praises – just last year they handled around 1,300 individual cases.

THE PROBLEM WITH POLICE

The coffee thaws my fingers back to life, and I listen as people from all corners of the world ask for advice on everything from housing troubles to managing withdrawal. As we prepare to move on to the homeless shelter Mændenes Hjem on Istedgade an older police officers walks by, casting a suspicious gaze at



Equipped with a Christiania bike full of food and hot drinks, the street attorneys head out into the night.



Peter Stanners

Krøl was in bad shape when we met him, after suffering an attack.

the gathered crowd. But before he can decide if we are trouble Gotfredsen raises her hand and shouts "Hey Jørgen!" He breaks into a big smile and waves back as he walks in the direction of the train station. As he leaves, Gotfredsen leans in close and says, "He is one of the good ones."

The system and society often looks down on the people on the fringes, and the police is no different. There was widespread public outrage last November when it was reported that it took six phone calls and 40-minutes before the authorities arrived to treat an unconscious homeless man at the Amagerbro metro station. By the time the police arrived on scene, the young man, Daniel Øhler, had passed away.

"Street people don't feel safe with the police. Many of them have experienced that the police can't even be bothered to take their complaints," explains Gotfredsen. "For example, one woman was brutally assaulted on Istedgade. An earring was ripped from her ear and a knife was pressed up to her face. When

Having your own attorney works, especially if you are an outlaw

NANNA GOTDREDSSEN

she went to report the assault, the police said she only had herself to blame for being in that environment. So we went with her and made them take up the case."

Soos interjects.

"Yeah, there seems to be this idea that because you are in the drug scene, you have signed away all your rights. But this is an example of someone really needing their rights. She really had a problem, and she needed her rights."

YOUR OWN ATTORNEY

Having fought the system on behalf of outsiders for this long, Gotfredsen doesn't conceal her frustrations with the police, social authorities and politicians. She argues that we need a more humane system that treats people as individuals, and a drug enforcement policy that stops punishing drug users. Among the main problems, she explains, is that the system treats everyone as though they were the same person, and that whenever parliament proposes a new initiative, it is always done without consulting the

people it is meant to help.

"No social programme is going to work without working with people," she explains.

Gadejuristen has reversed this trend to some extent. Their work has not only influenced domestic politics and decision makers, it has also been copied around the world.

"Ten years ago, Norway started an organisation based on our model, and we have colleagues doing similar work for homosexuals in Uganda. We have also been to Indonesia, Thailand, Russia and Lebanon, where we explained how we work and helped get them started."

As the interview winds down, I am reminded of Martin and his troubles. It is then that I realise that Gadejuristen's mission isn't to reform the system, but to care for the individuals that struggle with it – the 'outlaws' that face obstacles at every turn.

"Having your own attorney works, especially if you are an outlaw," Gotfredsen says with a smile. "I love street people. I just want you to remember that." **M**

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Peter Stanners

Tijana Miskovic and Thierry Geoffroy thinks contemporary art is way too slow to make any real impact on society.

The ultra contemporary art movement

Artists producing new work every day that contributes to the public debate – this is the ambition of the 2017 Ultra Contemporary Biennale

It's the 2007 Istanbul Biennale, and I'm running down the central shopping street in a small group. The word 'Biennalist' is emblazoned in red on our white headbands, and as we jog, we debate whether the theme of this year's biennale – optimism in a time of global war – is hypocritical, since the exhibition receives funding from corporations that contribute to global unrest.

That conversation was my first introduction to the work of the Colonel, aka Thierry Geoffroy, a French conceptual artist based in Copenhagen. Seated in the café of the Black Diamond library in central Copenhagen this February, he declares that it's about time the contemporary art world got a wake up call.

"The problem with Fox News is that it makes people believe that what they are watching is news, when it is just propaganda. Contemporary art has the same problem. It pretends to care about things, but does the opposite. It sup-

ports the weapons industry and vodka. It pretends to be critical, but it isn't. And pretending is bad for all of us."

ULTRA FAST ART

My jog through Istanbul was what Geoffroy likes to call a 'Critical Run', and it is one of several art formats he has invented. All tend to incorporate participation and reflection about the role of the artist in society.

But today he wants to tell me about a new idea: an Ultra Contemporary Biennale. Over the space of six weeks in Copenhagen in 2017, artists will create new work every day that addresses pressing social questions. The art will be created and presented in galleries, public spaces and institutions, and consist of everything from sculpture to performance art.

"The art world has abused the word contemporary. When you go to a contemporary art

I am fighting apathy

THIERRY GEOFFROY

Peter Stanners

show, you are seeing antiques. The word has been stolen, so we need a new word: ultra contemporary. It's about creating a city that debates in the present, a city that breathes at the same speed as the now."

Ultra contemporary isn't the first concept Geoffroy has introduced into art-speak. Along with the Critical Run, he is best known for his Emergency Rooms – spaces installed in galleries where artists and the public debate current social issues. The idea is to exercise what Geoffroy calls our 'awareness muscle', our ability to think critically about the world around us.

"I am fighting apathy," he explains. "It's like a gas that has been dropped on society and makes people start sleeping. People notice they can kill without anyone intervening, and politicians can be corrupt without anyone noticing. The whole system is gassed, and it's my enemy. So now I'm trying to find a formu-

la to create an antidote, a recipe to fight this apathy gas."

DYSFUNCTION DETECTORS

Artists play an important role in society, in Geoffroy's view. Not content to produce works of aesthetic beauty that are easily commodified by wealthy art collectors, he argues that artists are uniquely capable of detecting what he likes to call 'dysfunctions' in society.

It's a view shared by his collaborator and curator Tijana Miskovic, who sits beside him today.

"Artists take things that people normally think of as separate and create new meanings by combining them," she says. "Visual aesthetics through colour, shape and form should be brought into the daily debate. They add something to the written word."

Miskovic also argues that artists tend to register changes in society long before they develop into actual issues. The problem is that while contemporary artists might claim to address political or sociological issues, the process of creating their work is too slow to contribute to the debate. The Ultra Contemporary

movement, on the other hand, will give a platform for artists to communicate their ideas immediately.

"People who oppose the ultra contemporary will say, 'art cannot be done fast'," says Geoffroy. "But just because you have done something quickly doesn't mean you haven't been thinking about it for ten years. It's like taking a snapshot, like what the photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson called the 'decisive moment' – you can wait five hours, but when you take it, it happens very fast."

Fast art will mean less-polished works, they admit, but this will simply shift our understanding of what a successful work is. Ultra contemporary works will be judged by their relevance and efficiency, and by their ability to address the issues of the day.

THE ROLE OF THE ARTIST

Geoffroy adopted the name the Colonel as an homage to his father, a French military man who served in Algeria and South-East Asia. Geoffroy remembers overhearing his father speaking about military strategy with colleagues in their home, and has inherited his fa-

Artists take things that people normally think of as separate and create new meanings by combining them

TIJANA MISKOVIC

ther's systematic and strategic thinking.

"In order to exist, you need a strategy for living. You can just exist, or you can make a manifesto, and by making a manifesto you design your life and give it shape. I write lots of lists for what I will do next week and in ten years' time. I try to give shape to the future," he explains.

Geoffroy is disappointed with the role of the artist in modern society, limited by static galleries and presenting ancient work as though it were relevant. And he is annoyed, because he knows that artists see things in a way many others cannot.

"The artists are capturing things. They have a capacity to integrate information and give birth to an artwork that is a synthesis of everything they feel. They can give us a real-time diagnosis and look ahead to what might come, so we must capture what they say and give it to the public as fast as possible!" he exclaims, before levelling his final rebuke at the contemporary art world.

"I want them to be ashamed of being antiques and of misusing the word contemporary!" M

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ESSAY

The reeducation of Lesley-Ann Brown

All of we is one – that's what they say in Trinidad. But it took me getting expelled from school in Brooklyn to find out

When I was ten, I travelled to Trinidad alone. When the plane landed, the door swung open and I was hit by a humid blanket of air that kinked my hair even more. The palm trees looked like they were relaxing against the sky, while a deafening explosion of crickets filled the air.

It was the summer of 1982, and I had been kicked out of school in Brooklyn. My parents, compelled by immigrant survival instincts, did the only thing they could – send me to Trinidad to be with my family.

It was probably for the best. Stanley from the block was the first to go to jail. He was only sixteen, and I remember hearing the words 'Rikers Island' for the first time. While he was locked up in New York's most infamous jail, we tried to avoid being sucked into the city's disrepair, into crime, drugs and pregnancy. Stanley's girlfriend Nicole failed to dodge the last one, aged only 16.

We roller skated at the Empire Skating Rink and jumped double-dutch with telephone wire on concrete streets. Stanley's mother, Pat Walker, facilitated this, in her determination to offer us a fate different to her son's.

ORIGINS AND HERITAGE

While Brooklyn exposed me to the realities of American racial politics and how to be proud of my diasporic heritage, Trinidad was the nail I hammered home to secure a stronger sense of my identi-

ty. Black leadership? No problem. When I landed in Piarco International Airport, an Afro weighed down my small frame, and a colourful outfit kept me true to my Caribbean roots. But I will never forget the comfort I felt when I saw our Prime Minister. He was brown like me. And this was in the 80s.

Years later, I am standing at the passport office in Copenhagen.

"Babirsingh," I repeat and proceed to spell my mother's maiden name. The clerk can be forgiven for not understanding it. Sikh names aren't common in the West, and are even less expected when they belong to a woman with no air of Sikh about her.

But in Trinidad, racial mash-ups are common. Everyone knows that if a name ends with 'singh', you are an East Indian. I grew up with jokes like: What do you call an Indian walking on a wall? Balance-singh. An Indian standing between two buildings? Ali. We didn't find the jokes racist – they gave us an opportunity to talk about the secrets that coursed through our veins. Through humour, we claimed ownership of our complicated culture, heritage and individual lineages.

During secondary school at Providence Girls Catholic School in Belmont, Trinidad, it was not uncommon to meet black girls with Chinese names and Indian girls with Portuguese ones. My own family tree is no different. I see names like DeGannes, Charles,



That's me on the right, a good Trinidadian school girl.

Baboolal, and Nunez from forebears that were Corsican, Punjabi, French Creole, East Indian and Portuguese. I close my eyes and re-imagine the journeys they mapped across the globe just to produce me, with my name, Lesley-Ann Brown.

All of we is one is a famous Trinidadian saying, and our biological offspring are oftentimes a testament to that. Although my moth-

er's family name is Balbirsingh, few of us appear connected to that Punjabi name visually. We are a family stitched together by illicit affairs and courageous love stories that dared to look the establishment in the eye.

SOUL OF THE STEEL PAN

"You know what?" my ex-husband once said to me, "I've travelled the world, and I have to say Trinidad is the only place where I felt I came close to racial unity."

In America I learned to be American, and in Trinidad I would learn to be Trinidadian. I mastered accents and the ability to 'code switch', learning languages unconsciously, which came in handy when learning Danish. It wasn't difficult to learn words such as 'de' and 'dem', because in Trinidad, we dropped the 'th' a long time ago. The cadence of a Trinidadian accent also came in handy when trying to hide my American twang in Danish, minimising how often Danes switched over to English when they heard it.

My ten-year-old self didn't yet know what she would someday learn, though. Sleeping next to my snoring grandmother in Diamond Vale, I would think how the crickets sounded like the steel pan. By turning empty oil barrels into these instruments, the poor in Trinidad fashioned an entire culture out of what was discarded by the rich. And that sound – that soft crashing dancing sound – is a fuel I am still burning. **M**

Lesley-Ann Brown

FOREIGN

It's not as bad as I say it is

Reporters in Egypt might not always have it easy, but it's our sources that you should really worry about

In the beginning of February, three of my colleagues were finally released after more than 400 days behind bars in Egypt's most notorious maximum-security prison. Australian Peter Greste was deported, and the following week, his two Egyptian colleagues from al-Jazeera English were released on bail.

Their sudden release – before the farce of a trial had finished – clearly resulted from pressure that rights groups and the international media had placed on the Egyptian regime. Their campaign rightly called the arrests – and the crackdown on media freedoms in Egypt in general – unjust.

But the story of the jailed journalists suggests that all foreign reporters in Egypt face legal prosecution for their critical reporting. That is not the case. Although the al-Jazeera journalists were accused of crimes related to their reporting, their incarceration was related to very specific circumstances in the chaotic period that followed the removal of President Mohamed Morsi from power in July 2013. If it had been the content of their reporting that got them arrested, the regime would have found reasons to put the entire foreign press corps behind bars.

I bring this up because most people think my job as a correspondent in Egypt is really dangerous these days. And they have many reasons to think so, with plenty of negative news stories and advice from Western governments not to travel to large parts of the country. Reporters Without Borders says that more journalists were arrested in Egypt in 2014 than in any other country in the world except Ukraine.

But I'm rarely worried about my

personal safety. Often I find myself arguing that things aren't as bad as my colleagues and I make out in our reporting. Because while some things are really bad, a lot of nuance is lost in the reports.

Take, for example, the arrest of Alain Gresh, editor of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, while he was interviewing two Egyptian journalists at a café last November. It became a top international story, with the mainstream media running headlines along the lines of 'French journalist arrested for talking politics in café'.

The 'arrest' lasted only an hour and a half, however, and when I bumped into Gresh by chance two days later, he was hardly shaken by the incident. On the contrary, he was sitting in another café in central Cairo talking to another journalist, a friend of mine who is under surveillance by the intelligence services and who would probably have been arrested a long time ago if it weren't for reasons that can't be mentioned here.

Was Gresh reckless? No, he is a veteran reporter who is familiar with how the security services operate. The incident at the café only confirmed this. As soon as senior police officers learned of Gresh's detention, they ordered him released. The same evening he was invited to the police headquarters to receive an official apology from a deputy of the Minister of Interior.

The Egyptian regime may be unhappy with much of the coverage in the international media, but it doesn't want to spoil its relations with Western countries. The arrest of Peter Greste and his colleagues from al-Jazeera English was an exception to that rule, because it also happened during very exceptional times.

Today, foreign reporters in Egypt are still writing critical stories about the regime and its repression of dissent. We still meet with members of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood and write about the terrible conditions in Egypt's prisons. And at the end of the year, we still have our press credentials renewed through a simple bureaucratic system that must be the easiest to navigate in the Arab world.

Our greatest worries are not for our own personal safety, but for the safety of our sources. It can be risky for them to be speaking to journalists, and so we need to take precautions. These days, this means being skilled in online security to ensure that we don't expose our sources, with whom we often communicate using smartphone apps or other online services.

But nuances such as these are often lost when the mainstream media cover great injustices and acts of violence. When hundreds of Islamists are sentenced to death in Egyptian courts, it is rarely mentioned that these verdicts serve as a political tool, and that few, if any, of the condemned will end up at the end of a noose. And when a student gets arrested in Cairo for possession of George Orwell's 1984, it is not mentioned that if the book were the reason for the arrest, it is without doubt an isolated incident. 1984 is sold by bookshops and street vendors across Cairo, and is so prominently displayed that it must be one of the best-selling books in Egypt.

It seems that many reporters think that including these nuances would spoil their narrative of suppression and injustice. In the case of the three imprisoned al-Jazeera journalists, they may even



A view of the pyramids from Cairo.

Flickr / Tim Kelly

Rasmus Bøgeskov
Larsen

have felt that it would be a betrayal of their colleagues to speak out about how low-risk reporting in Egypt really is.

I don't believe this is true. On the contrary, I think that the audience can easily be worn out by stories that leave a completely bleak impression of things, whereas nuance can pique curiosity and bring a much-needed perspective to news reports. As journalists, we are not supposed to work as advocacy groups do, even when our own colleagues are in jail. Our job is to present the reality of life with all its twists and turns. **M**

COLUMN

Drop your old books

Both literal practitioners of religion and hysterical followers of tolerance-at-all-costs stand in the way of a healthy society based on secular humanism

Charlie Hebdo is the newspaper I used to buy when traveling from Paris to Copenhagen, and the one my mother brings me when she wants to get me something "from home". When I was young, I used to watch a TV show hosted by Cabu, one of the cartoonists shot dead in January. And I remember when another of the murdered cartoonists, Georges Wolinski, received the Legion d'Honneur during my teenage years.

I am among the many Frenchmen who believe that Charlie Hebdo's co-founder Professeur Choron and its former star cartoonist Reiser are two of the greatest geniuses and humourists of our times. My favourite book, my bible, which I return to several times every year, is a "worst of" Hara Kiri images – the cult monthly that later became Charlie Hebdo.

During the 1960s, several issues of Hara Kiri magazine were banned due to their previously unheard-of irreverence toward the establishment. This was quite a step, given that France has been a global frontrunner in anti-establishment thinking since the time of Voltaire. Hara Kiri was eventually banned outright and had to close down after it sparked national outrage with its poor front-page pun on the death of President Charles de Gaulle. The publication re-launched as a weekly, Charlie Hebdo, its increased circulation probably thanks to the publicity they reaped from the ban. The name "Charlie" is a familiar nickname for "Charles" (de Gaulle)... Et toc!

HARMLESS GOOFBALLS

If anyone deserves credit for being early patrons of TOTAL freedom of expression, for daring to ridicule the norms of the media landscape, for calling bullshit on the ways and means of the establishment, these guys do. Look at blog culture, or the irreverence of popular websites like 9gag. These guys helped build the

foundation of this progressive counter culture, which is now all over the internet, two generations ago.

The atrocity of the massacre, the chaos of the three-day manhunt, and the ensuing overwhelming public outpouring of emotion have overshadowed the discussion of Charlie Hebdo's cultural and intellectual relevance. Many people in France know that they paved the way for freedom of expression over the past five decades. Sadly, the importance of their work and legacy has been misrepresented internationally due to the crass aesthetics of their cartoons.

The debate has also ignored just how harmless they were – a bunch of goofy dudes with scruffy hair, working hard to make ends meet with a semi-underground publication. They were the original nerds in the purest form, the socks-and-sandals elite.

Some terrorists seem to believe that the West and the Middle East are at war. You'd have to have an extremely poor understanding of the world to believe that blowing yourself up in the Metro serves any constructive purpose – but given enough stupidity and anger, terrorism as an act of war almost makes sense.

But to shoot these nerds in the head one by one because they drew some cartoons – that goes far beyond stupidity or despair or any act of territorial war. It is evil in its purest form – an evil that can only be derived from the certitudes and insanities that come from a primitive understanding of religious scriptures.

Apologists for religion keep repeating that extremists misinterpret religion. How I wish it were so! Unfortunately, religious purists from the four corners of the globe have been quite clear for a few millennia now, and "slay the infidels" seems to have been their main message. It is in fact the moderates who twist religion's traditional laws in a bid for broader appeal.

And all the better! All religions

should reform, like the brave Pope Francis seems to be attempting, to become compatible with modern-day democracy and humanism. This secular humanism is precisely what free thinkers like Charlie Hebdo – and anyone who dares to oppose the conformities of their forefathers – are spreading.

THE TRUTH WILL OUT

Which brings me to my point: the falsely progressive have polluted the debate with their "freedom of expression... but" mentality. The cliché-leftists, who have spent the past months blaming it all on "the right".

Honour is a driving force in Arab culture in general. And defending the honour of their prophet is the direct motivation of the attackers. So can we here in the Western left please stop treating Arabs like helpless victims, for our sake as well as their own? The Middle East is harsh terrain, physically, socially, politically – and the "pragmatic dialogue" that Politiken and other softy-leftists in general seem to live by has become worse than ridiculous: it's become dangerous.

How dare these so-called progressives hijack the situation to put the blame on their political opponents? I am no fan of Le Pen or Pia Kjaersgård, but to blame terror on them is really an insult to our intelligence – us down here, who live on the surface of Planet Earth. Tolerance is the way to go in some cases, but it seems that leftist intellectuals didn't notice that the whole peace-and-love thing began being ridiculous in the mid-1970s.

Wake up, reactionary leftists, you have listened to "Imagine" a few too many times!

The fact is: the truth doesn't hurt. And everyone should get out of the truth's way. The truth should win, and the truth will win, slowly, but surely, as it reveals itself, generation after generation. When we make mistakes, we should learn from

Let's not "tolerate" those who are against the very basics of democracy. Let's speak frankly to each other, no matter if you're black or white

them, rather than insisting on the principles that we held onto a couple of generations ago.

TOWARD SECULAR HUMANISM

There should be no "freedom of expression... but". Our teenage kids are up-voting pictures of Putin performing fellatio on 9gag. It may be childish, but claiming these kids would to some extent be responsible for their own death by terror is completely absurd. The right to be humorous, honest or provocative far outweighs whatever claims any religion or minority will ever make. The very fact that the cartoonists and writers of Charlie Hebdo were victims of terror proves what they were saying all along: the basic rules of secular humanism are under siege.

We have fought for freedom and moulded our democracy through the centuries, and it is ludicrous to claim that we should put up with special considerations towards a culture that is centuries behind. I am not talking about Arab culture, I am talking about anyone who takes religion too literally. Let's not "tolerate" those who are against the very basics of democracy. Let's speak frankly to each other, whether we're black or white.

The situation is especially tragic for the hundreds of millions of Muslims who are hard-working, decent people, who know that stoning women and beheading infidels is a medieval practice.

And for those of us who so dearly want to be "progressive": let's not get stuck in the ideals of earlier generations. It's square to be hip. The cliché-leftists really seem to be stuck with a "groovy cool" ideology that has been a joke for a couple of decades. Let us continue the slow push towards secular humanism – it is the natural path of evolution for the Western world in 2015. But let's not confuse humanism with goofy leftism and its outdated ideals. **M**

Thomas Dalvang
Fleurquin

COLUMN



Jakob Tøstrup

The Portrait of Y that followed X

Generation Y is often portrayed as a narcissistic burden on society, as the illustration shows. But whose fault could that be?

My generation is lazy and narcissistic because of when we were born. That is, according to commentators and the string of Douglas Coupland-wannabe articles who have vented against Millennials/Generation Y/anyone born between 1980 and 2000.

The most critical example came from Time magazine, which published a cover of a girl lying on her stomach and taking a selfie, accompanied by the headline "The Me Me Generation."

All the articles I read supported their claims with facts, figures and obligatory quotes from old people, all singing variations on "things were very different back in my day."

Whatever the truth about my 'selfish' generation may be – and there may be some truth buried in the generational character assassinations – sweeping generalisations about large groups can only be preposterous.

But that's another debate. Instead, let's take a look at the story of a young woman, let's call her Y.

Y was born in the late 1980s. These were optimistic times, with Francis Fukuyama declaring the end of history as world communism crumbled with the Soviet Union. Western democracy and capitalism had prevailed as the best possi-

ble systems for commerce and government.

Y spent her early years believing in this system. Individualism and materialism were ideals to like and even love. So, too, was hip hop. Governments of the world were liberating their financial systems, and Bill Clinton signed away the "growth stifling" financial regulations of Glass-Steagall.

Times were good. There was no longer anything to fear, besides a few people stirring up a ruckus in the Baltics, and good ol' NATO put a stop to that. Nothing was disturbing our well-earned peace, and even our old foe China had embraced capitalism with a vigour and zeal that put the rest of us to shame. Y and her parents could look forward to a bright future.com.

But just as Y was suffering through puberty, tragedy struck. She can still remember where she was when the second plane hit. Now the best system had found the best villain lurking somewhere in the mountains of Afghanistan and the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula. The age of peace and quiet had lasted a decade.

Y learned to be afraid, very afraid. Our system was still good, we had simply discovered some alien people who didn't get it yet. We needed

to help them understand – it was the End of History Burden.

She could still look forward to the future and the chance to decide what she wanted to be when she grew up. The possibilities were endless, as money never ran out. Society couldn't keep up with all the ultra billionaires that now seemed to be everywhere. Buy low, sell high – the markets were heating up. But then they weren't.

Something was going terribly wrong. Her friends the bankers had thrown money at the property market, telling her that credit would never dry up and the party would never end. But then it did, and overnight they became the criminals that shoplifters aspire to be.

The banks fell like dominos, and world leaders who had been so diligent at convincing her that the only way was up suddenly had to step in, red-faced, and explain to Y and her parents that the feast had not only been too massive, it had also been too big to fail. The jobs dried up, the credit ran out, and people lost their homes. But since we were at the End of History, there was no other possible system to turn to – and meanwhile there was still an enemy out there to defeat by all means necessary.

Y became disillusioned with her

Technology enabled her to show the rest of the world just how special she was

world, its leaders and their ideas. Like the Lost Generation had done following World War I, she turned inwards – not in search of spirituality, but in search of ego. She had been taught that hard work and individual effort are all that people need to succeed. She had learned that she had to be ready to face evildoers. She had been taught to be a hyper-individualist. So she became one. Her distrust in governments and institutions bordered on the paranoid, and when she learned that the bureaucrats had been reading her emails, her paranoia was justified.

Y thought, "Fuck this, society is so far gone that I should just take care of myself." So she did. Technology enabled her to show the rest of the world just how special she was, and how little she cared for this old society, which had brought her nothing but confusion and grief.

If she's lucky, Y now works in a field that allows her to express her individuality, but where she will earn less than her parents did. If she can be bothered to vote, she will choose a party that encourages a fear of immigration instead of the preservation of public goods. She rejects the traditional political parties that she doesn't feel represent her, but she does have Instagram. **M**

Elias Thorsson



The Vietnamese Durum!

There's a new meat-filled treat in town that has Nørrebrogade's kebab shop owners scratching their heads. It's a little bit French with a heavy dash of Asian and a whole lot of awesome! The 'Bánh Mì' is taking Copenhagen by storm – and it's here to stay.

The Vietnamese baguette might be the best unintended consequence of France's colonial conquest in Asia. What's not to like? It's a crispy, crunchy and fluffy baguette, filled with your choice of marinated meat and topped off with fresh Vietnamese vegetables and a generous squirt of chilli sauce. The finest example is Frederiksberg's District Tonkin, a vibrant café and interior design shop that has locals lining up seven days a week.

DISTRICT TONKIN –
Concept Store
Gammel Kongevej
152A, 1850 Fred-
eriksberg C

DISTRICT TONKIN –
Bánh Mì
Dronningens Tvær-
gade 12, 1302
København K

Can't get enough
Banh Mì? Try these
other spots.

BÁNH MÌ
Elmegade 20, 2200
København N

NHA TRANG
Jesper Broch-
mands Gade 11, 2200
København N

Carl Coleman

We spoke to District Tonkin co-owner NICKIE MYDUNG NGUYEN, to glean a little insight into this instant Vietnamese classic.

So what exactly is in a Bánh Mì?

We sell four different types of Bánh Mìs: barbecued pork, traditional Vietnamese sausage and barbecued pork, grilled beef with sesame and honey and lastly steamed tofu.

They all come with leeks, spring onions, cucumber, coriander, chili and our homemade sauces. Some also have pickled vegetables and red onion oil.

What is the most vital ingredient or component of the perfect Bánh Mì?

Crispy and moist bread, perfect sauce, fresh vegetables and well-marinated meat.

Can you tell us a little bit about your background and what inspired you to open District Tonkin?

I was born in a refugee camp in Singapore, and my family arrived in Denmark as refugees in 1981. But the first time I went to Vietnam was when I was 23 to work as a trainee account manager for a Danish furniture company. It was a big shock when I arrived, but it was so amaz-

ing to taste all the Vietnamese flavours for the first time.

I was working in Ho Chi Minh City, but I craved the creative world in Hanoi and travelled there often to find new galleries and artists, to see the architecture and streets and also, of course, to eat the food. My love for Hanoi grew so great that I promised myself that one day I would open a small boutique and serve my favourite food and give back a little bit of Hanoi. I had always worked in sales and marketing, specialising in concepts, so we opened this concept store in October 2013.

Why are Danes lining up night and day for these sandwiches?

I am not sure, but I hope that they can taste the passion I have for the Bánh Mì! I do not compromise on the flavours and I serve them as I would eat them if I were in Vietnam. The Bánh Mì is here to stay!

Do you plan on expanding, or are you satisfied with remaining a popular, local hotspot? What is the future for District Tonkin?

We actually just expanded with a new shop on Dronningens Tværgade in central Copenhagen. The new shop is more focussed on simple Northern Vietnamese street food, while the concept store remains a boutique and café. But you can still get our four Bánh Mìs in both places! **M**

CARL'S 3 CITY PICKS



Kalaset's interior is a retro-lover's dream. Photo: flickr / Keiran Lynam

KALASET Vendersgade 16, 1363 København K

Like a vintage curiosity hauled into the modern world, Kalaset is fast becoming one of the city's classic drinking and dining spots. The name means 'party' in Swedish, which isn't surprising given that it's the brainchild of native Swede Caroline Lanner. Her idea was to create a café that summoned memories of her Swedish upbringing, inspired by her Grandma's home cooking and quirky-antique style of interior design. As the smell of

pancakes wafts through the restaurant and you admire the old-school stereos affixed to the wall, you can't help but imagine yourself in 'Mormor's living room'.

So where does one start with their simple but already renowned menu? I guess we should begin with the first meal of the day, breakfast. Hangover or no, it's hard to pass up the classic 'Mormors' brunch. The heaping plate includes yummy scrambled eggs, bacon, chilli sausages, fresh fruit, a smoothie, cheese and bread. There are plenty of vegetarian options too, including scrumptious falafel and

grilled bell peppers.

For dinner, look no further than their eponymous burger. The Kalaset – served with cheddar, bacon and grilled peppers in addition to the usual trimmings – is deliciously juicy and comes with the house's roast potatoes. Alternatively, there's the popular Barcelona burger, topped with Parma ham and mozzarella, or the hefty Brooklyn, topped with blue cheese and sweet-chilli jam.

After dinner, Kalaset transforms into a relaxed bar, so you can wash your meal down with an offbeat cocktail from the friendly bar staff.



The simple sign welcoming you into one of Nørrebro's finest watering holes. Photo: Facebook

KRONBORGGADE 3 Kronborggade 3, 2200 Nørrebro

Tucked away on a quiet residential street in Nørrebro lies a haven for bohemians, poets, musicians, bar flies and well...any old Dick and Fanny really. Kronborggade 3 – sometimes known simply as "BAR" due to its unmistakable neon sign – is a dependable dive bar for beer drinkers who like their ashtrays overflowing and their carpet sticky. Despite its dim-lit charm and nicotine-laced walls, KBG3 prides itself on an impressive and elabo-

rate menu of boutique beers and spirits, thanks to owner Rasmus 'Rammo' Krebs's passion for fine booze, good music and hygge. After all, if you're going to get wasted, you may as well be drinking the good stuff.

When Rammo opened KBG3 in 2011, a dedicated community of regulars instantly found their home. Rammo's love of music is apparent in the psychedelic wax that is on constant rotation. The well-informed bartenders spin anything from Lennon to Spacemen 3 to The Clean – rock n' rollers will be in their element.

Weekends can be pretty busy in this small establishment, so if you want a bit of a buzz, Friday night would suit. Weeknights from Monday to Thursday offer a much more laid back, cosy atmosphere. There is little in the way of food, so arrive with a full stomach and a decent thirst. If you can't be fussed with obscure IPAs, there's always a nice cold pint of Hancock, the house draft served for a cool 35 kroner a pint. Sounds great, right? But approach with caution! Many punters have walked out of 'BAR' a little sideways, your humble reviewer included.



Av Av Av. Press photo

CLUBSÓNAR FESTIVAL COPENHAGEN March 13-14, DR Byen

Established in Barcelona, Sónar Festival has been curating mind-altering summer dance parties starring the premier names in electronic music for the last 20 years. Every June, they bring pulsating kicks to the city's steaming hot streets, attracting crowds from around the world.

The festival's central missions are to uncover home grown talent and explore the link between creativity and technology.

In recent years, they have travelled beyond their warm shores, bringing their curatorial genius to cities such as Reykjavik, Buenos Aires, New York and London. This March, it's Copenhagen's turn, with a legion of incredible electronic artists descending on the big blue cube that is the DR Koncerthus. The Copenhagen bill includes Metronomy, Factory Floor, Daniel Avery, Finland's rising star Jaakko Eino Kalevi, and local Danish names like the experimental Puce Mary, Darkness Falls, local legend Djuna Barnes, the highly anticipated Sekuoia,

and DJ super-trio AV AV AV. Unlike Barcelona's other gigantic festival, the hipster indie-rock Primavera, you'll be hard pressed to spot a guitar at Sónar. Held on three stages over two days, the festival is capped at 2600 people – so if you're an electro head with a craving for summer, you'd better act fast, as this promises to be one of the year's best events.

WHAT'S ON • MARCH



WALL'S PICTURES
Jeff Wall has been one the most important figures in the art world over the last decades and now you can experience a collection of some of his best photographs.

Louisiana
louisiana.dk

ALL
MONTH

100 YEARS TOGETHER
Artist cooperative GRØNNINGEN is celebrating its 100-year anniversary with a very special exhibition this month. Opening on March 7.

Den Frie
denfrie.dk

ALL
MONTH

MULTI-STRANGE
Canadian artist duo Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller bring six unique multimedia installations to AroS for the exhibition Something Strange This Way.

ARoS
aros.dk

2

WHAT IS LOVE?
The Golden Day's festival folks will attempt to answer the question without any answers in this series of morning lectures on the topic of love.

Nørregade 6
goldendaysfestival.dk
Ends March 6

5

HELL RAISING
American glampunk band EX HEX is being tipped as one of the hottest new names in music and their debut album Rips is something you should be checking out now.

Loppen
loppen.dk

8

GIRL POWER
Organisation Kvinfo is hosting a massive egalitarian party to celebrate the 100 year anniversary of women being granted the right to vote.

Store Vega
billetnet.dk



Guillaume Baylère

THE COPENHAGEN DERBY
In Danish football there is only one game that turns the temperature up to scorching hatred: FCK vs Brøndby. Expect harmful passion.

Parken
billetlugen.dk

10

ARIEL ANSWERS
Multi-talented multi-instrumentalist Ariel Pink is playing a concert, which will be preceded by a Q&A at the Royal Library.

Bremen Teater
billetnet.dk

11

WHITE COLLAR DOWN
The daily grind is killing us all, but William Foster decided to strike back. Enjoy Michael Douglas in the Joel Schumacher action movie Falling Down

Skuespilhuset
khlteater.dk
Ends 21



SIMPLER TIMES
Few bands are as iconically eighties as Simple Minds. Is there a more fitting way to celebrate the 30 year anniversary of The Breakfast Club than seeing them live?

Falconer Salen
billetlugen.dk
March 12

12

SHAKE THURSDAY
The French/Finnish indie pop band The Dø is one of the catchier outfits about. There really isn't a funner way to spend your thursday than going dancing.

Loppen
loppen.dk

Elias Thorsson



ST PATRICKS DAY
The celebration of everything Irish starts out at Rådhuspladsen at 2PM. Get kitted out in fancy dress, enjoy entertainment from the stage, before joining the parade through the city.

Rådhuspladsen
stpatricksdayparade.dk
March 17

WHAT'S ON • MARCH



I'M IN HEAVEN

It may be more than forty years since he got his first real six string, but Canadian rocker Bryan Adams will make you feel like you are still standing on your mama's porch.

Musikhuset Aarhus
billetlugen.dk
March 18

19

FOS OPENING

Today is the opening of Danish artist FOS's biggest ever solo exhibition. His works combine humour and criticism to make the complicated seem simple.

Kunsthall Charlottenborg
kunsthallcarlottenborg.dk

20

BLUNT BEATS

The mysterious Londoner Dean Blunt released the weirdly interesting album Black Metal last year and now he's bringing his unique sound to Copenhagen.

Jazzhouse
jazzhouse.dk

21

MAY I HAVE SOME MORE?

Everyone who loves food has to check out this two-day gastronomical feast where you can sample, shop and learn the tricks of the trade.

Øksnehallen
madbillet.dk

INTERNATIONAL FULL-TIME
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(IN ENGLISH)

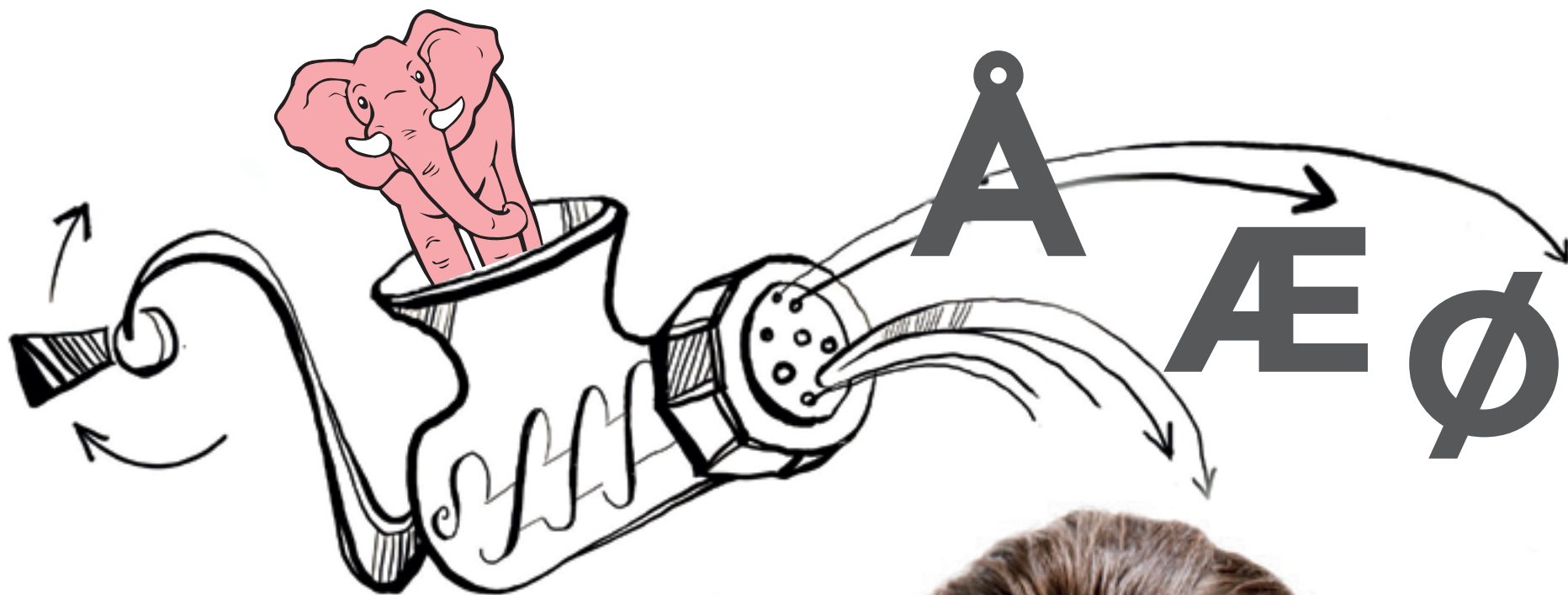
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