

Sex workers
pay tax but
still don't
have rights
and security

Constant
rule chang-
es disrupt
the lives of
immigrants

Aaron
Dessner
from The
National
on why he
made Den-
mark home



Shakespeare's soundtrack

Mike Sheridan talks about going from bedroom producer to writing the score to Hamlet

THE MURMUR is a Danish newspaper, which just happens to use the English language. Through original reporting and photography, we tell stories about what it's like to live in Denmark.

THE MURMUR



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CONSPIRACY theorists make me bristle. It's a narcissistic affliction of inflated self-importance. Somehow, only they are shrewd enough to see the cracks in the narrative fed to us by the **MAINSTREAM MEDIA**, which is controlled by all-powerful **SPECIAL INTERESTS**. (But apparently not powerful enough to shut down YouTube channels and blogs that expose their nefarious behaviour.) 🙄

I spent a few weeks as a member of a Danish Facebook group of flat-earthers who believe the world is a flat circle of land surrounded by an ice wall and covered by a glass dome. "Do your research," one prominent user told me when I asked whether they really believed that NASA was a fake space agency, whose thousands of staff are all in on the secret.

How does he know who to trust, and who not to? Why does he trust obscure YouTubers over established experts? I suspect that conspiracy theorists are driven by a deep suspicion of power, and an awareness of the sheer magnitude of human power and wealth. Once you've got that in your head, you start to think, well, anything's possible, isn't it?

They're not wrong that there are people with more money and power than we can possibly imagine. And they're right that there's a lot going on behind the scenes that we're not aware of. I just don't understand why, if we are both equally interested in knowing the world as it is, we have different facts?

When I talked to my Dad about this, he brought up the Austrian philosopher Popper. In his 1934 book, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, Popper explains that disproving statements is much easier than proving them. "No matter how many instances of white swans we may have observed, this does not justify the conclusion that all swans are white," Popper wrote.

So what's the function of developing knowledge if not to know the truth? My Dad argues it's about utility – we seek out knowledge because it helps us understand and explain the world, as well as make predictions about the future.

When a new understanding arises that does a better job of explaining the world, then we ditch the old way and move on. The problem is that the old ways are sticky, and become encoded in cultural norms, religion, and so on.

For many people, it makes sense to have a coherent inner map of the world, even if it's inaccurate and based on outdated ideas. And while some people actively shield themselves from information that conflicts with their worldview, algorithms on social media now do this work for us, by only serving us information that chimes with what we already believe.

As we become increasingly polarised, we shout our facts across the widening chasm. And in the middle lie conspiracy theorists (egotists who thrive on knowing better) and merchants of falsehood (purveyors of fake news who profit from division and sectarianism).

What's at stake is the ability to take action on issues that affect all humanity, and to maintain the open liberal societies that grew out of the Enlightenment. And as long as we focus on who's got the better facts, those who thrive on doubt will continue to win. How do I disprove that the Rothschilds are in charge, the moon landings were faked, that the earth is flat? No body of evidence will convince them.

Instead, we could try and tailor our messages to suit their worldview. Argue, for example, that even if climate change is a conspiracy, actions to combat it are worthwhile, improving health, wellbeing and ecosystem resilience. Even if Western governments conspired to create, then destroy, ISIS to sow doubt in Muslims that a caliphate is the best form of government, that Western Liberal societies offer minorities the most freedom and highest quality of life. That even if the Rothschilds are in charge, we are not helpless, and there are plenty of grassroots ways to create cohesive and happy communities.

On that note, a public service announcement. It's June, and summer has started in earnest. That means two things. First, wear sunscreen. One in seven Danes contracts skin cancer, and it kills five people every week. Second, The Murmur is going on summer holiday, and will return in August. Perhaps then one of you can tell me how the seasons work on a flat earth? **M**

When society wants to do something about 'prostitution', they use SKAT as a vehicle, because it's easy to find illegal activity through tax mistakes or evasion.

SUSANNE MØLLER, SPOKESPERSON FOR THE SEX WORKERS' INTEREST ORGANIZATION



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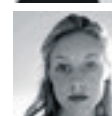
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Polina Bachlakova Contributor. A Canadian journalist and editor whose writing focusses on feminist issues and social activism. This issue she investigated why sex workers are deprived of rights despite paying taxes on their work.



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[vrinsk]

English: *Neigh*
Japanese: *Hihiin*
Swedish: *Gnägg*
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MONTH IN REVIEW

Parking fines repaid

Aarhus City Council has to re-pay 669 parking tickets worth around 350,000 kroner after they were issue in error. The municipality had forgotten to ask police for permission to carry out a residents parking scheme trial.

Girl gets six years for planning terror attacks against schools

An unnamed 17-year-old Islamist sympathiser known as the "Kundby Girl" has been jailed for six years by Holbæk City Court for attempted terrorism. A Muslim convert, she had tried to contact Isis leaders on Twitter, but

was arrested when she was 15 when her parents became suspicious of her "chemical experiments".

TV2 have released a recording of the girl admitting to a teacher of her intentions to bomb her former

school. She also made plans to bomb the Jewish Carolinaskolen. Prior to sentencing, the prosecution requested that she be jailed indefinitely, but the amateurish nature of the plot resulted in a more lenient sentence.

Worse psychiatric care

There were 44 percent more mentally ill patients in 2015 compared to 2008, according to a new study by the nurse's union Dansk Sygeplejeråd. Over the same period, the number of beds for the patients reduced by ten percent.

STUDENTS KILLED

In early May, two American students were killed in a jetski crash in Copenhagen harbour. Seven students from DIS, Study Abroad in Scandinavia, were in a rental boat when a jetski lost control and flew out of the water at 50 kilometres an hour, striking the passengers.

The 24-year-old jetski driver fled the scene but was arrested on his arrival at Albertslund harbour. He was on weekend release from prison.

Danish authorities are now tightening egislation for jetskis, including the introduction of a new watercraft license.

Emily Tait

DONG sells oil and gas division to increase investments in offshore wind

Publicly owned energy company DONG has sold its oil and gas division, DONG E & P, to chemical giant Ineos for seven billion kroner. Chief Executive of the DONG, Henrik Poulsen, said the deal makes strategic sense for Ineos and is also a financial success for DONG with the transaction generating a net profit of 2.5 billion kroner. The windfall is expected to go towards investments in offshore wind turbines. Dong has installed 26 percent of the global capacity of offshore wind.



CAMPSITE MURDER

A 53-year-old man has been detained after two men in their sixties were killed at a campsite in Vejers, west of Varde.

The night before the attack, the owner of the campsite contacted police to report the 53-year-old, who he believed to be mentally unstable, but the police did not evaluate him to be a threat to other citizens.

The following morning the two men were found stabbed to death in the bathroom at Stjerne Camping. As of yet, the police do not know the motivation for the crime.



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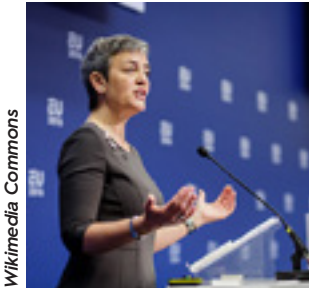


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Goodbye Crisis
Economic growth is being felt across the country for the first time since the financial crisis, according to lobby group Dansk Erhverv. Salaries, employment, and houseprices, are growing in all corners of Denmark.



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Competition commissioner Margrethe Vestager fines Facebook
The European Commission has fined Facebook €110 million for providing misleading information during the Commission's regulation of Facebook's acquisition of WhatsApp in 2014. The Commission has uncovered that, contrary to Facebook's statements during the 2014 merger process, Facebook staff were already aware of the possibility of automatically connecting Facebook and WhatsApp users' identities. Competition commissioner Margrethe Vestager, the former Danish deputy prime minister, stated: "today's decision sends a clear signal to companies that they must comply with all aspects of EU merger rules".

VIOLENT RETURN
A confidential report revealed that an Afghan police officer assaulted two failed asylum seekers that refused to disembark a plane in Kabul. They were among 16 failed Afghan asylum seekers who were flown to Afghanistan under supervision of 50 Danish police officers, who witnessed the assault. Danish authorities are responsible for evaluating and preventing potential breaches of human rights, according to Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen of Sweden's Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights.



DTU

DTU developing a self driving bus
Denmark's first self-driving bus is currently being tested at the Technical University of Denmark (DTU). The electrically-powered, partially 3D-printed bus, named Olli, was designed through an open innovation process with international input from students. Olli is currently being run on a closed track, using light radars to create a 3D map for safe navigation. But DTU and its operators, Autonomous Mobility, aim to use Olli as part of an on-campus transportation. Peter Sorgenfrei, CEO of Autonomous Mobility, imagines that, in future, vehicles like Olli, "will reduce congestion, pollution, and the number of road traffic casualties by introducing sustainable technology that only focuses on transporting people safely from A to B".



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CITY

Making Copenhagen truly green

Copenhagen is often seen as a 'green' city, due to its ambitious climate plans and its focus on pedestrians and cycling. But in recent years, residents have expressed concern that the city has lost much of its actual green cover, as trees have been cut down either because of disease or to make way for infrastructure projects.

City Hall has now set aside 324 million kroner to pay for 28,000 new trees across the capital, in the second stage of an ambitious plan to plant 100,000 trees by 2025 – 17,000 trees have been planted or financed since 2015.

According to City Hall, residents want more trees on the city's streets, but these are expensive to plant. Breaking asphalt and ensuring that underground utilities are not affected raises the cost to around 75,000 kroner apiece.

Between 100 and 150 trees will be planted along Nørrebrogade, while around 2,000 trees will be planted in places currently set aside for car parking.

A fairytale tower

A new tourist attraction based on themes from the works of Hans Christian Andersen is coming to Copenhagen's Nordhavn district. The 6.5 billion kroner development includes a 280-metre tall tower, which will be the tallest in the Nordic region.

Covering around 85,000 square meters, the H.C. Andersen Adventure Tower will include an outdoor park, a hotel, shops, indoor amusements, and themed exhibitions. It is hoped that around 1.5 million guests will visit every year.

"The location outside the city on a large undeveloped site opposite the harbour gives us the opportunity to construct an extraordinarily tall building that will create the economic platform for establishing numerous social housing units and a green park with free access," say the project's developers, Kurt Immanuel Pedersen and John Christensen.

Danish architect Bjarke Ingels will be responsible for designing the tower, which will have an observation



Mayor Frank Jensen has decided to move ahead with creating temporary student housing across the city out of containers. He could take some inspiration from Bjarke Ingels, whose 'Urban Rigger' prototype demonstrates the potential for floating container homes.

deck overlooking the sea as well as a restaurant with a sky bar.

"Copenhagen is a city of spires. The city centre has evolved with its historic spires as landmarks: the Stock Exchange, Church of Our Saviour, City Hall and Christiansborg Palace," says Ingels.

"From the sea and harbour, the landmarks are currently the cranes, power stations and silos. Located at the maritime gateway to Copenhagen, the H.C. Andersen Tower will give us the opportunity to reimagine Nordhavn's new district, the harbourfront, as well as Copenhagen's skyline, to be an integrated architectural whole," he continued.

HORESTA, the trade association for the hotel, restaurant and tourism industry in Denmark, estimates that around 8,000 jobs will be created during the construction phase in the four

or five years prior to opening around 2027. It is also expected to create 1,500 to 1,800 new permanent jobs in and around the amusement and adventure park, observation tower and hotel, as well as in the shops and restaurants.

Student container city

Containers could house students on empty and undeveloped land around the city, argues Copenhagen Lord Mayor Frank Jensen.

Speaking to Politiken newspaper, Jensen says that land on Refshaleøen, Kløverparken and Nordhavn could easily be used to address the housing shortages facing the city's students.

"These types of homes would suit Copenhagen and fit perfectly into these underdeveloped areas. If we maximise the opportunity, we could

create homes for around 800 students," he says.

"Containers can be an exciting and alternative form of housing that are both cheap and easy to create a community with, which appeals to young people. They can be situated in areas that have a raw feel, such as the harbour. If they are located and designed in the right way – they can be clad with wood, for example – I think they can also be attractive to look at."

New planning laws mean that municipalities are allowed to use land for temporary projects for up to ten years.

Copenhagener of the year

The urban section of Politiken newspaper, iByen, holds an annual competition to celebrate the best bars, restaurants and events in the city. They also recognise one person as Copenhagener of the Year.

This year, two city residents involved in urban development have been nominated. The first is Mikael Colville-Andersen, a pro-cycling urban mobility expert and founder of the Copenhagenize consultancy, who is known for his scathing criticism of poor public infrastructure – he called the new Inner Harbour Bridge a "stupid, stupid bridge [that has] failed miserably in respecting the basic concepts of bicycle urbanism."

On Facebook, Colville-Andersen wrote that he was flattered by the nomination, but that he would be casting his own vote for Morten Kabell, the city's mayor for technical and environmental affairs. Politiken argues that he's made huge improvements to the city since taking office in 2013, widening cycle paths and pavements to allow more room for cyclists and pedestrians, while also opening up more space for shops and cafés to operate on sidewalks.

"His ambition to make the medieval district of Copenhagen car-free has resulted in the digging up of the promenade along Frederiksholms Canal, to replace the cars with wider sidewalks with space for hanging out, more bicycle parking spaces and more room for pedestrians. We like that," writes Politiken. **M**

Peter Stanners

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POLITICS

COMMISSION LAUNCHED TO INVESTIGATE TAX SCANDALS

Billions of kroner in taxes have been lost in a number of scandals affecting the tax authority SKAT. Now a commission will attempt to uncover what went wrong

WITHOUT TAXES, there could be no welfare state. Which is why the scandals that the Tax Ministry and tax authority SKAT have suffered in recent years are so damaging to the government's integrity.

Among the worst of the scandals is the 12.3 billion kroner lost to foreign scammers in falsified VAT rebates for stocks and shares that were never bought. Then there's SKAT's digital collections system, EFI, which was supposed to simplify the process of collecting unpaid tax. After launching seven years behind schedule, it failed to make a significant dent in the 74 billion kroner owed to SKAT before it was shuttered in 2015 at a cost of 475 million kroner. The most recent estimate puts the unpaid tax bill at around 80 billion kroner.

The failings at SKAT and the Tax Ministry can be traced to both left and right-wing governments – there have been eight different tax ministers since 2010 from four different left and right-wing parties – and are the result of failed ambitions to cut costs and improve efficiency in tax collection.

Now a cross-aisle coalition of parties has decided to launch a commission to investigate what went wrong.

The Alternative was first to propose the commission in early May, arguing that Parliament needs to send a signal to Danes that it takes the enormous losses seriously.

"The political system needs to show that it acknowledges its failings, takes responsibility, and learns from them. This must never happen again," Alternativet wrote in its press release.

The Danish People's Party (DF) and the Social Democrats (Socialdemokratiet) supported the proposal, and together formed a majority to pass it in Parliament.

"It is vital that we rebuild trust in SKAT and in the social contract we have, that everyone contributes," DF leader Kristian Thulesen Dahl stated in a press release, adding that he wanted the commission to report in stages, so that its lessons can be quickly integrated into the rebuilding of the Tax Ministry and SKAT.

Among the toughest critics of SKAT's failings has been Martin Krasnik, editor of Weekendavisen, who calls the 80 billion kroner unpaid tax bill one of the greatest scandals in modern history – for while the welfare state was deprived of funding, the wealthiest profited from tax cuts.

"Think of the teachers, social care assistants or beds in psychiatric hospitals we could have afforded," Krasnik wrote in a leader, before laying the blame primarily on a 2005 reform by the coalition Liberal (Venstre) and Conservative (Konservative) government that cut a third of the staff at SKAT. Their roles were meant to be replaced by the ineffectual EFI.

Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen was also in power then, and Kristian Jensen, the tax minister at the time, is currently finance minister.

"We are ruled by politicians who have wasted our money and ignored their responsibility. Some would say their motivation was ideology, the liberal fight against the state, but the explanation is more likely the pursuit of power and ordinary incompetence," Krasnik wrote. **M**



Christoffer Rosenfeldt

Weekendavisen editor Martin Krasnik condemned current and former governments for mismanagement.



Wikimedia Commons / Dragan Tatic

Immigration minister Inger Støjberg issued a blanket ban to stop minors living with their adult partners in asylum centres. She may have known the order was illegal when she made it.

MINISTER ALLEGEDLY KNEW ORDER TO SEPARATE CHILD BRIDES WAS ILLEGAL

Concern for children forced into marriages led immigration minister Inger Støjberg to ban asylum seekers from living with their partners if either was a minor. The order was overturned after just a few months, but new revelations suggest that Støjberg knew the order was illegal

IN JANUARY LAST YEAR, Berlingske newspaper revealed that married children were living with their partners in Danish asylum centres. This provoked a strong reaction in Parliament, where a number of political parties condemned what they regarded as the asylum system's complicity in forced marriages.

The following month, Støjberg issued an order:

"Under new guidelines, no minors under age 18 may be housed in the same asylum centre as a spouse or partner. This also applies if the couple has one or more children."

In total, 34 couples were separated in the wake of her February 2016 order before the blanket ban was overturned the following July. The majority were female asylum seekers aged 16 or 17, with partners aged 17 to 23.

One couple that was separated during that period submitted a complaint to the Parliamentary Ombudsman, who ruled in

March that Støjberg's order was not only objectionable, it was also illegal.

But Politiken newspaper has now revealed that Støjberg was warned before the order was issued. An email was circulated several days prior, warning that the order was unlawful, and top civil servants modified it to ensure its legality. Støjberg decided to go ahead with the original, blanket order anyway.

Just over a week later, the Immigration Ministry asked the top expert in the Justice Ministry for their assessment of the law. They concluded couples must be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The Immigration Service also wrote to the Parliamentary Ombudsman questioning whether the order violated Denmark's international obligations under human rights law – separating couples with children would violate their right to a family life.

"We abide by a fundamental principle that cases must be assessed individually," said Sten Bønsing, associate professor in public law at Aalborg University, to Politiken newspaper.

"If we suddenly decide that cases must all be decided in a particular way, that requires a law. But in this situation there was no law, just an administrative instruction, and that is not allowed."

Married children under age 15 are already separated from their adult partners in asylum centres, while those aged 15 to 17 are now assessed on a case-by-case basis. These children are separated from their adult partners if the assessment determines that the marriage is forced. **M**

FAMILY REUNIFICATION FOR THE WEALTHY AND EDUCATED ONLY

Danes can bring their foreign spouses to Denmark if they have a well-paid job lined up or if their profession is in demand. The rest will have to prove that their combined attachment to Denmark is greater than to any other country – an impossibility for Danes who've worked their entire careers abroad

TOUGH IMMIGRATION LAWS have made lives difficult for Danes living abroad and those with partners from outside the EU. This is, in part, deliberate. Both left and right-wing governments have tried to prevent non-Western immigrants from seeking partners in their country of origin and bringing them to Denmark under family reunification laws. They do, however, want Danes to be able to move abroad for their careers, and eventually return home with a foreign spouse. But writing the rules to restrict the former and enable the latter has proved challenging.

The first solution was to demand that Danes could only bring a foreign partner to Denmark if both are at least 24 years old and have a greater attachment to Denmark than to any other country. If they didn't satisfy the attachment rule, they could still qualify for family reunification if one of them had been a Danish citizen for at least 26 years.

But the government had to go back to the drawing board after the European Court of Human Rights ruled last year that the 26-year-rule was indirectly discriminatory to naturalised Danes. In other words, Danes who had acquired citizenship later in life were not in the same position to satisfy the requirements as Danes who had been granted citizenship at birth.

The government then had to choose whether to scrap the attachment rule entirely, which would make it much easier to seek family reunification, or just get rid of the 26-year rule.

They did the latter, which meant that all Danes wanting to bring their partners to Denmark would have to satisfy the attachment rule. The law still prevented pro forma marriages, but it also meant that Danes who had spent their entire working lives outside Denmark were finding that returning home with a foreign spouse was an impossibility.

The government was under pressure to find a solution, and in May it passed a law specifying that Danes don't have to satisfy the attachment requirement when applying for family reunification with a foreign spouse as long as they have a job with a salary of at least 408,000 kroner per year, or if their profession appears on the Positive List, indicating a shortage of qualified professionals.

While the law secured a majority in Parliament, opposition Social Democrats (Socialdemokratiet) demanded that the law include a sunset clause and be renegotiated next year.

The party's main concern is that Danes who return to retire or to work in fields that do not command a high salary are not helped by the new law.

During the consultation period, the organisation Danes Worldwide – which represents Danish expats – pointed out this preferential treatment.

"The law accommodates one special group of highly-paid Danish citizens, which will of course benefit from the new weakened conditions. But at the same time, a large group of Danish citizens are being ignored – those who don't earn 408,000 kroner or work in a profession on the Positive List," Secretary General Anne Marie Dalgaard wrote.

Danes Worldwide also proposed that the attachment clause be abolished, and a petition that was launched ahead of the law change in May collected over 10,000 signatures from Danes living in 90 countries. **M**



Anne Marie Dalgaard, Secretary General of Danes Worldwide, has criticised the new family reunification laws for only accommodating one special group of highly-paid Danish citizens.

Gender-neutral CPR

You may not realise it, but your civil registration number (CPR) reveals more than just when you were born. It consists of six numbers indicating your birthday followed by four seemingly random numbers. But when the last number is uneven, it identifies the holder as male, while even numbers identify females.

But now the Alternative (Alternativet) has decided that the time has come to end this system.

"We are making a principled break with society's gender binary perspective, that you can either have a boy or girl number," Alternativet's equality spokesperson Carolina Maier told Information newspaper.

"There are people who don't identify as one or the other. So it's about accommodating those people, and not allowing the CPR number to get in their way. There is nothing that is stopping us. It doesn't stop us registering gender-specific statistics, because the CPR number also registers gender in other data."

Alternativet proposed the change following complaints from LGBT Denmark that new identity cards for people without driving licences include the person's CPR number. For trans people, however, revealing the gender they were assigned at birth can put them at risk.

The coalition right-wing government, together with the Danish People's Party (DF) and the Social Democrats (Socialdemokratiet), opposed the proposal.

Economy and interior minister Simon Emil Ammitzbøl (Liberal Alliance) said the proposal would be too expensive.

"There are a number of public and private IT systems in health and database research that take gender directly from the CPR number. Those systems would have to be rebuilt. It's not the government's policy to incur unnecessary administrative burdens on the public and private sectors," he told Information newspaper.

A truly democratic party

Direct democracy is the central principle of the new political party Initiativet (The Initiative). Once in Parliament, they will allow the general public to vote, through an app, on how the party should vote on different laws.

"We don't think that the general pop-

ulation is taken seriously enough in Danish politics," co-founder Holger Thorup said.

"Politics has too much spin and scandal rather than actual political content that improves Denmark. Our party is a response to everything that is wrong today. We bring the voices of all Danes into Parliament by letting them have a say on all the votes, not just the one every four years."

On their website is an example of how the platform would work in real life, where everyone – not just their voters – will get to have a say on what Initiativet stands for.

"It benefits everyone if the policies that are passed in Parliament actually align with the points of view that exist in the voter base from which you get your mandate," co-founder Mikkel Møller Andersen said.

No increase of pension age

The pension age needs to go up because people are living longer, argues the government. But they were forced to shelve plans to increase the pension age from 67 to 67.5 after failing to secure a majority in Parliament.

"We are living longer than we expected, and we need more hands in the labour market," Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen said live on 21 Søndag on DRI.

"So it's sensible to adjust the pension age to create more equality between the generations and ensure our continued welfare. But it was incredibly difficult to secure broad support for it."

The minority right-wing government relies on the support of the Danish People's Party (DF) to form a majority in Parliament. But DF sided with the left wing against the proposal.

Morten Østergaard, leader of the centrist Social Liberal Party (Radikale), said the inability to raise the pension age doesn't bode well for the government.

"I think it's the government's duty to ensure that they have the necessary support for something as important as their economic policies before they form a government," Østergaard told Ritzau.

Rasmussen now has to find an alternate way to encourage Danes to work longer in order to free up money he has promised to spend elsewhere. **M**

Peter Stanners

Hate preacher list an own goal

As Denmark publishes a list of hate speakers banned from entering the country, the government has had to fend off criticism from experts who deem the list "random" and "pointless"



Jacob Mchangama, director of the judicial think tank Justitia, argues that the list of banned foreign hate speakers is random and undermines the principle of free speech.

LAST YEAR, the TV2 documentary *Moskeerne bag sløret* ('Mosques behind the scenes') uncovered the anti-democratic practices and ideologies being advocated behind closed doors by radicalised Danish Muslims. While the documentary was criticised by some for presenting an unnuanced representation of Denmark's Muslim community, it was rewarded with a nomination for the prestigious Cayling Prize for Investigative Journalism.

It also spurred action by Integration Minister Inger Støjberg of the Liberal Party (Venstre), who expressed concern that many of the more radical speakers in Danish mosques were being flown in from abroad.

"Denmark should not admit people who want to come here to advocate violence and terrorism on Danish soil," the minister told TV2, adding that it was important to keep out people "who want to overthrow our democracy."

Last month, the government released a list of six foreign "hate

There is a dilemma – can you shine a light on this problem without making the problem worse?

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR KIRSTINE SINCLAIR, THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN DENMARK

Joshua Hollingdale

speakers" that are now banned from entering Denmark. The list was approved by Parliament with support from the Danish People's Party (DF) and the opposition Social Democrats (Socialdemokrater).

Experts warn that the list is useless, however, and could even give radicals more ammunition for their cause.

SENDING A SIGNAL

The list's most prominent critic has been Jacob Mchangama, director of the judicial think tank Justitia, who argues that the list is random and undermines the principle of free speech.

"I think there is good reason to keep people who advocate terrorism and violence out of the country. However, that was already possible before this list, which makes it possible to keep people out on the basis of some pretty unclear criteria, and for saying things which – while they will certainly be viewed as controversial – are ac-

tually legal in Denmark," he says.

The six hate speakers on the list were selected by the Danish Immigration Service and mirror lists of other European countries. While Mchangama argues that many of the speakers express ideas that Danish society could certainly live without, their desire to spread anti-democratic views doesn't necessarily mean they pose a threat to society. Instead, the line should be drawn at people who are known affiliates of terrorist groups or are known to promote joining organizations such as ISIS or Al-Qaida.

"Basically, the government is saying that if you say something that is anti-democratic or a violation of the blasphemy law, then you are now not allowed into the country. I can't see that those things necessarily pose a threat to Denmark. I believe a much clearer threat should be posed to society before we start restricting who can enter the country," he says.

"There are so many others who could have been placed on a list like this. The arguments for the selection of these specific speakers have not been made public. Also, some of them have not even encouraged violence, which tells me that there are many others who could have been put on the list instead."

Niels Valdemar Vinding, an assistant professor at the University of Copenhagen and expert on Islam and Imams in the West, agrees.

"As far as I can see, there is no clear logic in this. All they've done is look to other countries and take six of the usual suspects," he says.

But the list does more than just restrict who can come to Denmark, argues Vinding. By including both extremist Christian minister Terry Jones and radical Muslim imam Bilal Philips, it sends a message that Denmark doesn't tolerate hate speech, regardless of who's doing the speaking.

MAKING MARTYRS

There can be some unfortunate and unintended consequences to such a list, he cautions.

"A list like this draws an incredible amount of attention from

people who are sympathetic to the extremist opinions of the six speakers. In this case, the list becomes an advertising billboard. Since the list was released, all six speakers have been Googled like crazy, and the international press has covered it. There is no doubt that they could have done their homework a bit better – it seems like symbolic politics to want to draw the line so publicly."

He adds that the list doesn't really combat the issue at hand. "All you do with this list is direct people's attention. It inevitably becomes polarising, because those who are strongly opposed to the people on the list will say it is not far-reaching enough, while those who are already sympathetic to the messages of the hate preachers will point to the hypocrisy of democracy and what they perceive as the undermining of free speech."

Kirstine Sinclair, an associate professor and expert in radicalisation from the University of Southern Denmark, agrees. To her, the list looks more like a symbolic policy than a useful tool.

"From what I understand, Danish politicians want to restrict the activities of conservative religious communities that in any way limit integration or undermine democracy. And that, I think, is very sensible. The question is what a list like this actually does. It can tell us whom we find problematic but it cannot limit the attention given to these people – quite the opposite actually – and it does not work preemptively in any way. It becomes a reaction to a problem that it does not help solve," says Sinclair.

POWERLESSNESS

Torben Ruberg Rasmussen has spent most of his career at the University of Southern Denmark studying radicalisation and religion in Muslim communities in Denmark. He sees the list as an act of helplessness.

"I believe that the issue in a nutshell is that we have a serious problem with radicalisation and parallel societies in the Danish context, but we still haven't properly formu-

Rasmus Degnbøl



Canadian imam Bilal Philips, left, and Dr. Terry Dale Jones are among six "hate speakers" who are banned from entering Denmark for the next two years. Philips has condoned suicide bombing, while Jones is a Christian minister who was internationally condemned for his plan to publicly burn Korans.

lated a workable strategy of how to intervene," he says.

"I don't think the list will have much effect, mostly because it is based on the notion that radicalisation comes from outside our borders. I think it is clear that radical Islam is a more or less integrated part of Muslim communities in Denmark."

Sinclair underlines that there is a risk that Danish Muslim communities will regard the list as evidence of persecution, and that Danish politicians will be willing to compromise on freedom of speech to fit their needs.

"There is a dilemma – can you shine a light on this problem without making the problem worse? In my opinion, the best way to go about it is through legislation, and to punish those who break the law. In which case we need to do what Justitia is doing and question whether we have the best legislation to combat the problem," she says, referring to Justitia's opposition to the blasphemy law.

"We should enter into dialogue and pose questions instead of throwing up a poster, which is the way I view the list. I am a strong believer in dialogue."

HARDCORE SEAL OF APPROVAL

Responding to the criticism, Venstre MP Jan E. Jørgensen (V) says the government was aware of the risk that the list could be used to fuel a narrative about the hypocritical West.

"We knew going in that the list would have the effect of shining light on these guys. They can use it as a sort of stamp of approval – a certificate of them being truly hardcore. That is obviously a disadvantage,

but one that we don't believe outweighs the positive consequences, which are that these people won't come to Denmark, host meetings, and get people on board with their message of hate."

Jørgensen concedes that the selection of hate speakers was a bit random, but said it was never supposed to be a comprehensive list of every radicalised preacher on the planet. To appear on the list, they not only have to hold anti-democratic views, they also have to have an audience. There also needs to be a good chance they might want to travel to Denmark.

He also stresses that politicians were not involved in the actual selection process.

"We have an 'arm's-length principle' so that no one can criticise us politicians for making selections based on our own prejudices. This is very important, as it means that no one can accuse us of using this to exclude certain persons for solely political reasons," he says.

SCHENGEN BAN

Mchangama has a final criticism that could ripple throughout Europe. The banned hate speakers aren't just banned from Denmark, but would have to be denied entry to the entire Schengen area – Europe's border-free region.

"When the list means that you are banned from all Schengen countries, it is plausible that other Schengen countries may start creating similar lists. Ultimately this could hit pro-democracy speakers in places like Poland and Hungary, who suddenly could be banned from coming to Denmark." **M**

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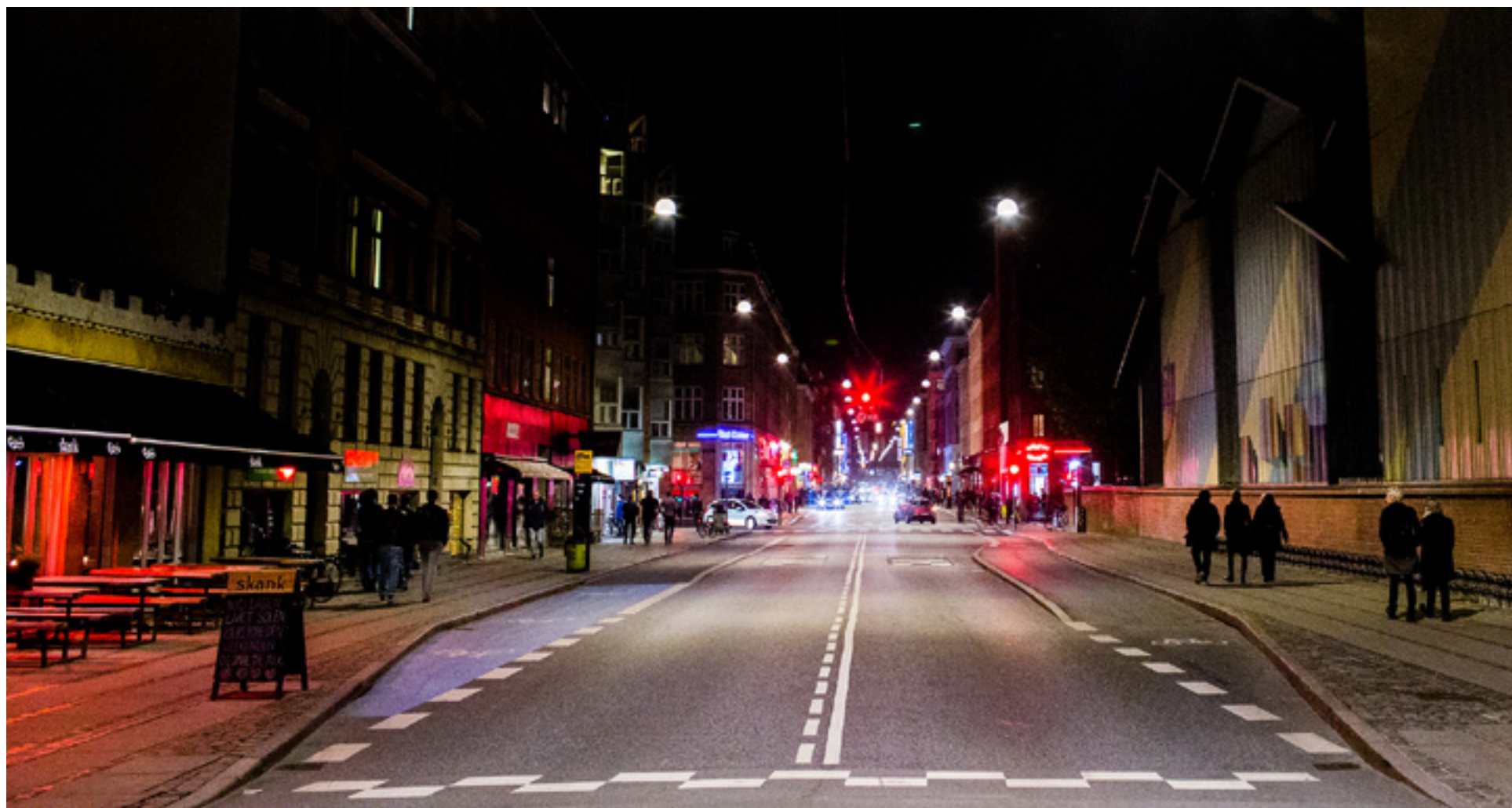
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Istedgade in Copenhagen's Vesterbro district is home to the city's red light district.

Paying taxes gives Danish residents equal rights – unless you're a sex worker

Sex workers lack the same protections as other professions and struggle to find safe places to work, even though sex work is a taxable profession. Experts argue that legal ambiguities and lingering social stigmas continue to marginalise a vulnerable group

IN 1999, the Danish government decriminalised sex work but failed to recognise it as a legal profession. Instead, sex work continued to be treated as a social problem and as the target of a range of taxpayer-funded initiatives.

"In a welfare state like Denmark, you are considered a worthy citizen if you pay your taxes. But while we want sex workers to register with the tax authority, they remain heavily stigmatised," says Sine Plambech, an anthropologist and researcher at the Danish Institute for International Studies.

For example, the Exit Prostitution project, carried out by the

Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI) from 2012 to 2016, sought to find the most efficient ways of helping prostitutes leave the profession. The 46 million kroner initiative was ultimately criticised by sex workers, who felt the project didn't bother to ask for their perspective.

Which is important, given that sex workers occupy an insecure legal grey zone – while it is legal to sell sex, it is illegal to procure it. Even lawyers aren't exactly sure what rights sex workers are entitled to.

"Many journalists and researchers ask me for clarity about the legal framework around sex work,



Anthropologist and filmmaker Sine Plambech is currently a post doc research fellow at the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS). She has years of professional experience in international migration, human trafficking, sex work research, socio-cultural and gender analysis. She conducts fieldwork in Nigeria into the deportation of Nigerian sex workers from the EU, and among Nigerians selling sex in the streets of Copenhagen. She also works in Thailand on sex work and marriage migration of Thai women to the EU.

Polina Bachlakova

but honestly, I don't know," says Maja Løvbjerg Hansen of the Danish Street Lawyers.

"Sex workers are excluded from the whole field of workers' rights, which is strange because they pay taxes and are registered as businesses. Since it's illegal to employ a sex worker, they can never be employees or obtain employee rights. But they cannot obtain the same rights as independent contractors or businesses, either."

SELF-EMPLOYED—WITHOUT THE RIGHTS

The tax status of sex workers is one area where their rights lag behind those of the rest of the working population. Sex workers are legally required to register as self-employed workers with the tax authority, SKAT, which grants them access to healthcare and to day care for their children.

But they are not granted all the protections and rights that self-employed workers enjoy, however, such as those enshrined in work safety legislation and business lease laws. They also struggle to obtain union membership and unemployment insurance, which impacts their ability to take maternity leave.

Susanne Møller, a sex worker and spokesperson for the Sex Workers' Interest Organization, argues that this unequal status keeps sex workers in a cycle of disempowerment.

"Our status as a not-legal, not-illegal business makes us so vulnerable," she says. "We cannot fight the system when it is unfair, and we are constantly at risk of being criminalised. It is important to have the opportunity to protect ourselves for the future the way everybody else does in Denmark. Why shouldn't we be allowed this protection?"

RIGHTS ON PAPER, STIGMA IN REALITY

Sex workers are also denied rights because of the stigma attached to their profession. Information newspaper reported in 2010 that

some insurers refused to offer business insurance to sex workers because of the social stigma.

Plambech argues this stigma demotivates sex workers from actually trying to get the insurances that they need.

"Generally, none of the women I work with want to be registered as sex workers with an A-kasse or SKAT. It's not that they don't want to register in the first place, it's just that they fear the stigma will follow them later in life," she says, adding that the fear is especially high for migrant sex workers who often come to Denmark to work for a limited time in order to support their families back home.

"If they are only doing sex work for six months, why would they want to be confronted with that ten years later?"

In addition to the obstacles to obtaining insurance, Løvbjerg Hansen explains how stigma also prevents sex workers from managing their finances according to legal guidelines.

"In Denmark, business owners are required to have business bank accounts, and on top of that, foreign business owners are required to have audited business plans when establishing themselves here. But that's very difficult for sex workers, since no one wants them as clients," she says.

"People don't talk about it, because sex workers won't complain. The banks don't write in their rejection letters that they reject people because they're sex workers, they say it on the phone. When people request it in writing, they claim the rejection is based on the person depositing too much cash per month."

Danske Bank's press office declined to clarify whether their institution accepts sex workers as business clients.

"As a general rule, we do not turn down customers who operate a legitimate business," the bank wrote to The Murmur in an email. "Whether that is so is part of the assessment we make in each individual case."

Our status as a not-legal, not-illegal business makes us so vulnerable.

SUSANNE MØLLER, SEX WORKER AND SPOKESPERSON FOR THE SEX WORKERS' INTEREST ORGANIZATION



Løvbjerg Hansen also notes that without a bank account, sex workers end up having to carry large amounts of cash, which puts them at risk. A report published by Amnesty International last year found that sex workers around the world are at increased risk of violent robbery or theft compared to the rest of the population.

PAY THE TAX, BUT BEAR THE COSTS

Sex workers are also at risk because they have a hard time finding a safe place to operate their business. According to Møller, landlords are unwilling to rent property to sex workers due to the ban on procuring sex, which pushes sex workers directly into the arms of organised crime.

"The procurement law prohibits sex workers from renting rooms or hiring any help for their business, ultimately forcing sex workers to collaborate with criminals," she says.

There is little research in Den-

Susanne Møller is spokesperson for the Sex Workers' Interest Organization, which was established in February 2008. Her activism started with an anonymous blog where she published her experiences as a sex worker in order to challenge ignorance and prejudice about the field.



mark into the effect of procurement law on sex worker safety, though a 2011 report by the Canadian Library of Parliament found that banning the procurement of sex pushes it further into the shadows. In contrast, after the Netherlands lifted their procurement ban in 2000, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs found that an increasing number of procurers abide by legal and human rights standards, and working conditions have generally become safer for sex workers.

Vivi Hollænder is the spokesperson for Denmark's Sexual Political Forum, a group of researchers, journalists and sexologists aiming to destigmatise Denmark's debate around sex work. A seasoned advocate for sex workers' rights, she has volunteered her time to assist them with book-keeping and secretarial work at brothels.

She believes that the procurement ban also puts sex workers at a disproportionate financial disadvantage within the tax system.

"Most of us can write off our operational costs through SKAT. But

Vivi Hollænder is the spokesperson for Denmark's Sexual Political Forum, which was established in 2007 to promote sexual tolerance, openness and respect for sexual diversity.

The police use SKAT to get into brothels and humiliate the sex workers – I have met sex workers who have been traumatised by the police.

VIVI HOLLÆNDER, SPOKESPERSON FOR DENMARK'S SEXUAL POLITICAL FORUM

you can't do this to the same extent as a sex worker," she says.

The problem is that it's illegal to make money from sex work, meaning that sex workers cannot declare where they are operating their business – in order to write off the cost of the rent – without putting their landlords at risk. And because landlords run a risk in renting property to sex workers, they charge well above market value.

Sædelighedspolitiet, a publication that gives a platform to sex workers, supports Hollænder's perspective. In 2013, they calculated that the procurement law forbids sex workers from writing off a whopping 70 percent of their total expenses.

"It's strange when you consider that everybody who makes money directly off of sex workers' incomes is considered a criminal – except for SKAT," Møller adds.

SKAT: TAX AUTHORITY, OR MORAL CRUSADERS?

It could be argued that SKAT has no choice but to implement discriminatory government legislation. But its direct involvement in police raids on brothels blurs the lines between complicity, ethics and even unjustified use of power.

In 2015, SKAT joined an inter-ministerial operation that aims to combat human trafficking. The Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings 2015-2018 extended SKAT's role from a simple tax collector to an agent in the social fight against human trafficking.

"While SKAT would claim it's ethical to conduct raids because it lets them increase control over human trafficking, sex workers would not agree," Plambeck says. "The idea that SKAT can participate in 'rescuing women' is certainly a very specific narrative regarding SKAT's relationship to the sex industry."

SKAT's press office stresses that the anti-trafficking initiative justifies its collaboration with police to intervene in social issues that transcend tax payment, as well as raid locations it suspects of trafficking activity.

"In its efforts to combat human trafficking, SKAT assists the police in identifying any victims of human trafficking and traffickers themselves," the agency wrote in an email to The Murmur, noting that personnel from the Danish

Center Against Human Trafficking have trained its staff to identify signs of human trafficking during raids.

"At the same time, SKAT ensures that the people they meet in connection with outbound control checks pay the taxes and VAT they owe, not more and not less," it adds.

But Møller claims that SKAT was already heavily involved in police raids even before the Action Plan to Combat Trafficking was in place.

"Five or six years ago, all brothels knew to expect a raid at least every month," she says.

"When society wants to do something about 'prostitution', they use SKAT as a vehicle, because it's easy to find illegal activity through tax mistakes or evasion. And when SKAT raids brothels, they bring the police."

Danish police are legally required to obtain court orders before they can enter premises they suspect of illegal activity. But both Møller and Løvbjerg Hansen believe that the police use SKAT to enter brothels – without any legitimate suspicion of criminal activity – under the pretence of 'providing security' for SKAT employees, who are allowed to enter the property on routine tax checkpoint missions.

SKAT declined to comment on this allegation. The agency likewise declined to provide The Murmur with statistics on the number of brothel raids it performs, but it did insist that its cooperation with police is ethical.

"Checkpoints are selected based on an assessment of materiality and risks, and SKAT carries out its outbound control procedures using the powers available to SKAT," the agency wrote. "SKAT or other authorities cannot use the control powers of other authorities when conducting outbound control checks, even if the efforts are implemented as a collaboration between several authorities."

Yet Hollænder describes a more nefarious reality than SKAT admits.

"I agree with the characterisation that the police use SKAT to get into brothels and humiliate the sex workers – I have met sex workers who have been aatised by the police," she says.

Sex workers in Denmark have published testimonies detailing

their experiences with brothel raids on Sædelighedspolitiet. They suggest that, in practice, SKAT's goal of combating human trafficking amounts to intimidation, coercion and humiliation of sex workers.

A CULTURE OF STIGMA

According to Løvbjerg Hansen, the lack of institutional accountability regarding brothel raids is merely a symptom of the larger social attitudes at play.

"I think a culture has developed around brothel raids that is unhealthy and a result of the stigma surrounding this industry," she says.

Indeed, Plambeck, Hollaender,

Møller and Løvbjerg Hansen all point out that stigma is the greatest barrier to progress in making legislation toward sex workers more ethical.

"I mean, SKAT and the government won't even use the words 'sex work'!" Hollaender exclaims, noting that SKAT's guide for sex workers still uses the term 'prostitution', which the workers themselves consider derogatory.

"SKAT wants their money, but they don't want to recognise that it's work. It's so hypocritical."

Møller and Plambeck note that even a small change such as increased help with accounting and managing finances would significantly improve sex workers' abil-

ity to navigate the system. Løvbjerg Hansen predicts even that won't happen due to the debilitating stigma.

"Officially, SKAT provides sex workers with the same assistance as other businesses," she says. "But there are many more test cases to observe in other businesses. With sex work, testing means putting your name on a complaint, and as long as there's so much stigma around it, sex workers will not want to do that."

In the meantime, the Sex Workers' Interest Organization has created its own tax guide for sex workers, to fill the gaps in the sparse brochure provided by SKAT.

Ultimately, Løvbjerg Hansen argues, SKAT's institutionalised discrimination against sex workers is merely a symptom of the failures and contradictions inherent in the political treatment of sex workers.

"SKAT is a civil service, they have to abide by the law," she says.

"It's not their fault: it's a political failure that we chose to decriminalise sex work without fixing all the issues around it. The tragedy of all this is that as long as it's difficult to figure out the laws, and as long as there is stigma, you leave the most important questions to the criminal environment." ■

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THE DISAPPEARING GOAL LINE: Immigrants complain of "injustice" of ever stricter permanent residency rules

Immigrants who were on track to get permanent residency have had the rug pulled from under them twice in two years, leaving some asking whether Denmark is the right country in which to invest their energy

SCROLLING through the selfies on Naeqeb Khan's Facebook profile, it's obvious that he loves to travel. He's pictured beneath the Eiffel Tower in Paris, exploring Södermalm in Stockholm, and admiring the spectacular views in Grindelwald, Switzerland.

Originally from Pakistan, Khan moved to Glasgow in 2008 to complete his studies and quickly realised he wanted to stay in Europe.

"I didn't want to go back to Pakistan – I had become used to living in the UK and its lifestyle and culture," he says.

So when the British government changed its visa rules, bringing his stay in the UK to an abrupt end, he carefully considered his options. He eventually came across Denmark's Green Card Programme, which gave non-EU nationals with a particular set of academic and language skills the opportunity to find work in Denmark.

His application was successful, and he moved to Copenhagen in 2013, but he soon realised that he and thousands of other green card holders faced huge challenges in joining the Danish labour market – they also weren't entitled to support from Jobcentres when looking for work – despite the implicit promise that their skills were in demand.

In 2014, Khan was elected an executive member of the Danish Green Card Association to draw attention to the programme's flaws. When the government decided to discontinue the programme last year, he successfully lobbied for an amendment that allowed current green card holders to continue renewing their residence permits.

"We understood that if there weren't many jobs for green card holders, then they should just abolish the programme. But the original bill meant that I would lose my visa and have to leave the country. I

People make life-changing decisions based on a certain set of rules. But even though they are on their way to fully satisfying every requirement, the rules are changed and they are made to wait longer. That is injustice.

NAQEEB KHAN

Peter Stanners

have invested years of my life here. If I had gone to Canada, I would already be a Canadian citizen – I can't just start at the bottom again."

CONSTANT CHANGES

Khan has been less successful in preventing swift and sweeping changes to permanent residency rules, however.

Among the central conditions are the length of stay in Denmark, Danish language proficiency, and employment. Until 2016, immigrants qualified for permanent residency after five years in Denmark as long as they were in full or part-time work or education for three out of those five years.

The refugee crisis prompted a raft of new immigration laws, and with bill L87, the government increased the residency requirement to six years and demanded that applicants had to be in full-time work for 2.5 of the previous 3 years – part-time work and education no longer counted.

In May, the rules were tightened once again with bill L154. Applicants now have to be Danish residents for eight years and be in full-time work for 3.5 of the past 4 years. Applicants must also have passed Danish level 2, rather than only Danish level 1.

TRYING TO KEEP UP

Speaking to Parliament while presenting L154, immigration minister Inger Støjberg argued the laws created more of an incentive for immigrants to integrate.

"In the opinion of the government, the possibility of gaining permanent residency is a privilege, and the parties agree that we need to set stricter demands on refugees and immigrants to assess their desire and ability to integrate," Støjberg said.

A number of organisations submitted their opinions on L154 during the consultation period, and the

vast majority expressed concern. Many pointed out that the rules had been changed ten times in ten years, making it difficult for immigrants to keep up with changing requirements.

But Støjberg argued that a fast-track channel that had been introduced the previous year meant that immigrants who were seriously committed to living in Denmark could be rewarded for their efforts.

The fast-track channel allows permanent residency after only four years if the applicant satisfies four supplementary conditions, but these make serious demands on an applicant's time: full-time work for four years, a pre-tax average salary of at least 275,400 kroner in the previous two years, volunteering in the local community, and passing Danish level 3, which requires near-fluency.

While new arrivals might decide to invest their time to satisfy these requirements, many immigrants who had structured their lives according to old rules were disappointed that their efforts no longer counted.

Take the case of John Kibuuka from Uganda, who met his Danish wife Signe in 2010 at an e-Learning conference, and who settled in Denmark because of the higher quality of life. They now have two young daughters together.

When they relocated to Denmark through family reunification, John decided to continue his education, as his qualifications from Uganda weren't recognised in Denmark. It was the sensible decision, as it improved his chances of getting a better-paid job, and being in full-time education would also count towards earning his permanent residency.

But when L87 was introduced without warning, his time spent in education suddenly no longer counted toward earning permanent residency – and they were back to square one.

"When we arrived in 2011, he

was set to get permanent residency after five years. Now it will be at least ten. And there's no knowing how many more times they're going to change the rules before we get to the point where we fulfil all the requirements," Signe explains.

"We hadn't anticipated all the trouble the government would give us. If we had, we might have chosen another country altogether."

SECURITY

John's lack of permanent residency has a major impact on the family. While John likes the idea of starting his own business after graduating, it's too much of a risk given that he needs an annual salary of 275,400 kroner in the two years before he submits his application, and work full time for at least 3.5 years out of the previous four years to qualify.

There is also pressure on Signe to remain the primary breadwinner. John's temporary residence permit can be withdrawn if she accepts the unemployment benefit *kontanthjælp* (unemployment insurance *dagpenge* is allowed).

John loses his right to permanent residence in he accepts any unemployment benefits in the four years before handing in his permanent residence application. If either accepts *kontanthjælp* before John has permanent residency, it may give cause to deny extension of their family reunification application.

"The social security that Denmark is so famous for doesn't apply to us, even though we pay the same taxes as everybody else," she says.

"It is an immense limitation of our freedom of choice, and I am getting more and more tired of being unable to make decisions about what's important in my own life. We're not planning much – planning, daring and trying will have to wait until a time when we can run the risk of failing without having to leave the country."

Like John Kibuuka, Khan decid-



Naqeeb Khan has campaigned for fair immigration rules after he arrived in Denmark on a green card in 2014.

ed to invest his time in establishing a solid foundation for a long life in Denmark. Khan knew that learning the language and building a network were essential, so in the first year he decided to work only two days a week and spend the rest of the time attending language school and looking for work in his field, human resource management.

But changes to the green card programme and permanent residency rules have meant that Khan has had to focus more on work than integration, however.

"My plans kept failing as they changed the rules," he says, adding that the new permanent residency rules should not have applied to immigrants already in the country.

LEGALLY PROBLEMATIC

L87 was introduced to parliament without warning on December 10, 2015 and applied to all permanent residency applications handed in from that day on, even though the law was not formally passed until January 26, 2016.

According to immigration lawyer Eddie Khawaja, it was highly unusual – but not unconstitutional – that the government chose not to release L87 for a public hearing

before it took effect.

"Traditionally, you would only take this approach in an urgent situation. But the situation, the refugee crisis, did not seem to justify not giving foreign citizens the option to prepare themselves for the rule change," says Khawaja.

L 154 was released for public consultation two months before it was submitted to parliament, giving immigrants a chance to submit an application before the rules changed. Still, Khawaja argues that the constant and sudden changes to immigration law threatens to undermine trust in the legal and political system.

"The majority of foreign citizens wouldn't be able to navigate this without legal help, and from a rule of law perspective, that's problematic – they should be able to navigate the rules that are in place and how to change their conditions accordingly, with clarity."

Even those trying to stay updated with the new rules face communication roadblocks. From Khawaja's experience in immigration law, he knows that many immigrants prefer to get their information in English, rather than Danish, if it is available.

But while the Danish section of

The majority of foreign citizens wouldn't be able to navigate this without legal help. That's problematic.

EDDIE KHAWAJA, IMMIGRATION LAWYER

the Immigration Service's website, nyidanmark.dk, supplied a small warning that unspecified changes were coming to permanent residency rules while L 154 was going through parliament, the English-language section was only updated after the new rules took effect on May 15. On neither the Danish nor the English page was there a warning that the rules would retroactively apply to applications from March 15.

INJUSTICE

Khan and Kibuuka were handed a sliver of hope before the third reading of L154, when four opposition parties submitted an amendment that would restrict the changes to immigrants who had arrived in the country after December 31, 2015. The amendment failed, however, when the opposition-leading Social Democrats joined the government in voting it down.

For someone like Khan, permanent residency provides peace of mind. It means the government cannot revoke his right to live in the country, and that he will be able to live a life that is not centred on trying to live up to a checklist of requirements. For a family father like Kibuuka, it would also mean

getting more time with his children, as living up to the supplementary requirements uses up a lot of spare time.

Khan concedes that Denmark needs measures to ensure that those who are given the permanent right to live in Denmark aren't going to be a burden on the welfare state. But he argues that the recent changes – and the way they have been implemented – have needlessly disrupted the lives of thousands of immigrants, limited their ability to effectively integrate, and undermined Denmark's ability to attract and retain foreign talent.

"We understand that Denmark is a small country and it has to limit who can be here. We are not fighting to let everyone in – of course we love this country and we would also want to see it prosper, just like any Dane does. But is it fair to invite me based on one set of rules about how long I must work to receive permanent residence, only to increase that number along the way? People make life-changing decisions based on a certain set of rules. But even though they are on their way to fully satisfying every requirement, the rules are changed and they are made to wait longer. That is injustice." **M**

Are student grants for EU students a wasted investment?

Student grants and tuition-free university secure the future of the Danish labour market. But with many EU students travelling to Denmark for free grants and university education only to return home, should Danish taxpayers really be paying to educate Europe's youth?

SU AND FREE UNIVERSITY education are among the most cherished aspects of the Danish welfare system. But it's not just Danes that benefit. Around 20,000 EU residents received Danish SU in 2016, including Andrzej Rogala and Kasia Stefanczyk, who moved to Copenhagen in 2014 to start Masters programmes at Copenhagen Business School.

Originally from Warsaw, Stefanczyk now studies architectural engineering, while Rogala has specialised in design and innovation.

"I had personally never considered studying abroad, but I wanted to change something in my life. I knew little about Denmark before moving here, but I heard about the generous student grants that would allow me to move away from Poland," Rogala said.

"When you come from a developing country such as Poland, you hardly ever get the opportunity to study abroad, as it is very expensive and our families are not able to support us. Being Eastern European, I could have never afforded to move here if it weren't for SU."

Rogala points out that he earns more from Danish student grants than he used to earn as a qualified, full-time worker in Poland after completing his undergraduate studies. His salary amounted to 2,500 Zloty per month, equivalent to just under 4,500 Danish kroner.

"I love it here now, it is such an amazing place for both design and architecture. But if it weren't for SU, my parents would have had to give me all of their monthly earnings just to cover my rent," he continued.

WORKERS GET SU TOO

The rising cost of paying SU to EU students who move to Denmark primarily to study is a political hot potato. Accord-



Bijan Farsijani was born in Germany and came to Denmark to study innovation and entrepreneurship at CBS. He now runs his own startup company and thanks SU for giving him the support he needed so that he could invest time in building his business while still at university.

ing to the latest figures from the Ministry of Education and Research, EU residents claimed 901 million kroner in SU in 2016, compared to 399 million kroner in 2012.

The increase is almost entirely due to a 2013 ruling by the EU Court of Justice. Until then, EU residents in Denmark could qualify for SU in a number of ways, but they would have to demonstrate a long-term attachment to Denmark. For example, having a Danish spouse, or living in Denmark for at least five years.

SU was not available to EU residents who had no previous attachment to Denmark, and primarily moved to Denmark to study, however. Technically, EU rules on free movement mean that EU workers in a foreign country cannot be treated differently than national workers. But the interpretation by Danish authorities did not regard EU students as workers – even if they had a part time job – and they were therefore not entitled to Danish social bene-

fits such as SU.

The EU court ruled against this interpretation of the free movement rules, however, arguing that EU residents who move to Denmark with the primary goal of studying must be considered EU workers, as long as they work at least 10 to 12 hours per week. This is how Rogala and Stefanczyk qualify for SU – they both work as student assistants in addition to their studies.

The number of EU students claiming SU as EU workers – like Rogala and Stefanczyk – has exploded 2000 percent since the ruling, to 9,664 EU students last year. The increased cost on the taxpayer is around 400 million kroner per year.

WELFARE TOURISM?

Jakob Engel-Schmidt, education spokesperson for the ruling Liberal Party (Venstre) sees SU grants for European students as a great investment for the country, especially in terms of attracting foreign talent.

"Through free education and grants to all EU members, we are presenting Denmark as an open and equal country. We have a lot of talented people coming to Denmark, and we would not want it any other way," he said.

Still, the government is concerned that its enormous investment in EU students could be going to waste. 42 percent of EU students who received SU, and moved to Denmark less than a year before the start of their studies, had left Denmark within two years of graduation, the Ministry of Education and Research reported in November, while 38 percent remained.

"Danish society will have paid a lot of money over several years to provide their education, so we cannot afford a situation where we get nothing in return. Let me be clear, we are spending almost half a billion kroner a year on SU for European students, and it just can't go higher than that," said Engel-Schmidt.

Education Minister Ulla Tørnæs has repeatedly expressed her concern on the matter, and in a recent interview to TV2, she labelled the

situation as "expensive for the Danish treasury and unfair to all Danish taxpayers".

In response to these fears of so-called "welfare tourism", the government is considering a number of measures, including a reduction of University programmes that are offered in English. Engel-Schmidt is specifically targeting students enrolled at business schools around Denmark, where the registered number of graduates leaving the country is higher than average.

"When it comes to degrees from business academies, we see a lot of people coming from Eastern Europe, and about 65 percent of those who enjoy SU and free education leave straight after," Engel-Schmidt explained.

"We agreed to cut back on the number of study opportunities on business-related degrees offered in English, as it is a bad investment for Denmark and its taxpayers."

"THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN MAGNIFIED"

The government might be blowing the issue out of proportion, however.

Of the 20 billion kroner spent on SU in 2016, only around 4.5 percent (901 million kroner) was spent on around 20,000 EU, Swiss, Norwegian and Icelandic citizens. Just under half, 9,664, claim their SU as EU workers, which means that they must work and pay tax while accepting SU. And after graduating, almost 40 percent find a job in Denmark.

Nadja Shou Lauridsen, a lawyer and member of the think tank Think Europe, believes the government has repeatedly exaggerated the issue.

"I believe on one hand that the problem has been overstated, and on the other that Danes have a hard time understanding why EU citizens are entitled to welfare benefits. Most of them probably do not know that most EU students, unlike them, must work at least 10 hours per week to receive SU throughout their whole studies," she explains.

Lauridsen believes it is important to underline that EU students on benefits are also an active and

Gabriele Dellisanti

Cost of SU for EU students in 2016

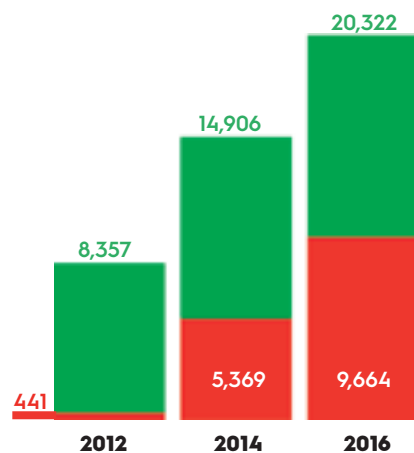
20 billion kroner · total SU budget

901 million kroner · SU for all EU students

412 million kroner · EU students claiming SU as EU workers

EU students claiming SU

All EU students claiming SU
EU students claiming SU as EU workers



important part of the Danish workforce. They pay their fair share of taxes and contribute to the economy from the very moment they start receiving SU.

She also argues that the Danish government should focus its energy on attracting European talent, rather on short-term goals such as cutting English-language programmes.

BENEFITS OF FREE MOVEMENT

Neither Stefanczyk nor Rogala have completed their Masters yet, but they expressed a desire to work in Denmark after graduating this summer. But they will also be open to opportunities elsewhere, and will be applying for jobs abroad – most of their friends who left Denmark did so only after actively seeking employment in the country for years after graduating.

"In the bigger picture, the question is where the vacancies are, and getting a job is the most important thing for me at the moment. I will try

here and see what happens, but I do know many people who have actively searched for a job in Denmark for years without success and left only for this reason," Rogala explained.

Bijan Farsijani is among the 40 percent of EU students who received SU and decided to stay in Denmark. Born in southern Germany, he moved to Copenhagen after completing his undergraduate studies in Berlin. He recently graduated from a Masters programme in innovation and entrepreneurship at CBS, and now runs his own start-up company.

If it weren't for SU, he would have had to work longer hours to support himself. Instead, he had time to invest in building the foundations of his business.

"During my Masters, I was working only 10 to 12 hours a week, and thanks to the money I got through SU, I did not have to work longer hours. If that was the case, I don't know if I'd be already running a com-

pany just a few months after graduating," he explained.

"We use machine learning and artificial intelligence to analyse big data, and there don't seem to be many companies in Denmark who do the same. So I believe we are somehow contributing to society here by bringing new knowledge to the country. This is already a way to pay back our SU."

He also underlined that while the EU's right to free movement did mean that students like him could claim Danish taxpayer funded grants, it also enables Danish businesses to hire talented and skilled workers from across the continent.

"One of the guys who works for us is from Poland, and another one, who will start soon, is from Hungary. They both moved here to study and are very rare talents in this field," Farsijani said.

"It is this very conglomeration of knowledge that is incredibly unique – it's very difficult to measure that value in kroner." **M**

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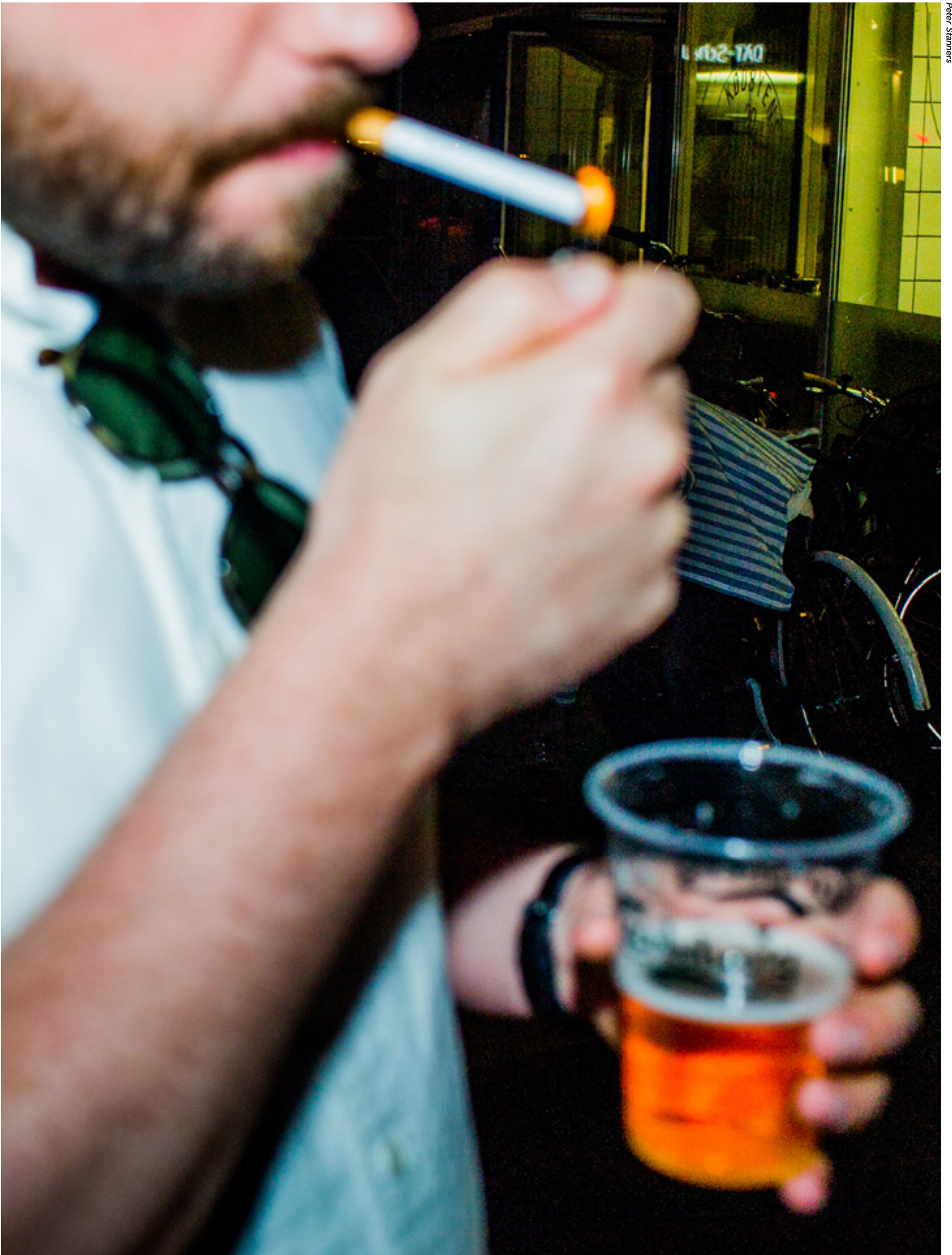
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Tobacco related illnesses are responsible for 15 percent of the state's spending on healthcare, but there is little political will to curb smoking.

The freedom to choose cancer

Danes are the biggest smokers in the Nordics, which contributes to the nation's high cancer rates and comparatively low life expectancy. But effective policies, such as increasing the cost of tobacco, remain politically poisonous

"DANISH CULTURE has always revolved around the feeling that nobody should tell us what to do or how to live our lives. If it weren't for this, we wouldn't be drinking and smoking as much as we do."

This is Betina Jacobsen's explanation for why Danes drink and smoke as much as they do. She is an associate professor in the Department of Sociology at Aalborg University and has spent years researching the trends and effectiveness of anti-smoking campaigns in Denmark.

She points out that the number of daily smokers in Denmark has dropped to 17 percent of the population, down from a high in the 1950s when 80 percent of men and 50 percent of women smoked cigarettes on a daily basis. But Danes still smoke much more than their Nordic neighbours – only 9.4 percent of Swedes and 14.2 percent of Norwegians smoke every day, according to the Nordic Monitoring System.

Smoking, poor diet, and high alcohol use all contribute to Denmark's high cancer rates – the highest in the world, according to the World Cancer Research Fund International. One in three Danes will suffer from cancer at some point in their life, which is among the reasons that Danes have the shortest life expectancy in Western Europe.

WORLD'S HIGHEST CANCER RATES

Lifestyle choices are the main drivers of high cancer rates in Denmark, and numbers suggest that half of all cases are currently preventable. While Norway and Sweden have implemented punitive taxes and other restrictions to limit tobacco and alcohol use, Denmark has maintained a permissive approach.

"There is one big problem I often encountered in my research – Danes reject restrictions in the name of freedom. In Denmark,

we obsess over feeling free from government control. While Danes like having freedom from control, Swedes believe they have freedom to enjoy good health and a long life," Jacobsen continued.

Gerda Engholm works as a senior statistician at the Danish Cancer Society (Kræftens Bekæmpelse), which maintains a database of cancer incidence and mortality rates across Scandinavia, NORDCAN. These statistics show that not only are Danes more likely to contract cancer, the survival rate is also lower than in neighbouring countries.

"In some cases, it is harder to understand what causes cancer. However, when trying to avoid an increase in cancer incidence, you have to look at the biggest risk factors, and tobacco is the most important one," Engholm observed.

Lung cancer is one of the most prevalent forms of cancer among both men and women, with over 90 percent of cases resulting from smoking. Around 4,500 new cases of lung cancer are registered in Denmark every year, accounting for 12 percent of all cancers. Mortality is high, with a survival rate of only 17 percent of women and 12 percent of men five years after diagnosis.

Research conducted by the University of Southern Denmark found that lung cancer is also the most expensive to treat, accounting for 15 percent of the state's yearly spending on health services.

Marie Kruse works as an analyst for the Centre of Health Economics Research (COHERE) at the University of Southern Denmark, and has researched the economics of cancer in Denmark.

"All Scandinavian health systems are financed in a way that makes it difficult to estimate the costs of a certain disease. However, as mortality from lung can-

The big problem with taxation is that it ends up hitting the lower-income classes, so we would rather find other alternatives to help people quit smoking or reduce their alcohol intake.

JES SØGAARD,
HEAD OF THE
DOCUMENTATION AND QUALITY DEPARTMENT
OF KRÆFTENS
BEKÆMPELSE

Gabriele Dellisanti

cer is extremely high, almost all patients end up in the very costly category 'most severe'," Kruse explains.

ONE-HUNDRED KRONER PACKS?

Countries around the world have decided to increase taxes on tobacco products in order to reduce tobacco consumption and ease the strain on public finances from treating tobacco-related illnesses. New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio recently set the minimum price of a pack of cigarettes at USD 13 (DKK 86), while in Australia a pack will cost ASD 40 (DKK 200) by 2020.

In Denmark, tobacco remains relatively cheap – a pack costs around DKK 45 – which makes smoking a habit affordable to children. In May, the Danish Health Authority (Sundhedsstyrelsen) reported that just over 50,000 Danish teenagers aged 11 to 17 smoke every week, and that 9.3 percent of them will end up dying from smoking.

Sophie Løhde – who was health minister until the formation of the coalition government late last year – did try to implement new policies to reduce the number of deaths from smoking, which is currently around 13,600 a year. She had an ambition to create the first smoke-free generation by 2030, and proposed banning smoking in vocational and upper secondary educational institutions.

She ran into opposition in Parliament, however, with both the Liberal Alliance and the Danish People's Party opposing new restrictions on smokers.

Restricting where people can smoke can make it less attractive, but increasing the cost is ultimately the best strategy. A poll by MEGAFON for TV2 and Politiken last year found that 12 percent of smokers would stop smoking if a pack of cigarettes were made 10 kroner more expensive,

Cancer in Denmark

Around 18,000 men and 17,000 women are diagnosed with cancer every year. In the 1940s, there were around 9,000 cancer diagnoses per year.

The most common forms of cancer diagnosis in Denmark per year (average, 2010 to 2014):

Breast cancer – 4,677 cases

Lung cancer – 4,635 cases

Prostate cancer – 4,577 cases

In 2014, there were 267,486 people living in Denmark who had received a cancer diagnosis at some point in their lives.

Around 34 percent of men and 31 percent of women will be diagnosed with cancer before age 75.

Source: Kræftens Bekæmpelse

while 20 percent said they would smoke less.

But Betina Jacobsen stresses that this policy is too unpopular to be politically viable.

"In Denmark, we have a problem with path dependency, meaning that we like to stick to what we are used to – and 100-kroner cigarette packs would be too much of a risk."

Jes Søgaard, Head of the Documentation and Quality department of Kræftens Bekæmpelse, argues that while cancer rates have stagnated in the last few years, the numbers are still too high to be ignored.

"We have not worked on any policy related to tax increases on tobacco or alcohol, but we wouldn't oppose them, either. The big problem with taxation is that it ends up hitting the lower-income classes, so we would rather find other alternatives to help people quit smoking or reduce their alcohol intake," he explains. **M**



The gardens of Henne Kirkeby Kro, where Paul Cunningham is head chef.

You have to learn to control anxiety – to be friends with it

Copenhagen's restaurants are overrated, and New Nordic has become a monoculture, says Michelin-starred chef **PAUL CUNNINGHAM**

Paul Cunningham is head chef at Henne Kirkeby Kro, a 200-year-old inn in western Jutland that won its first Michelin star last year and its second this spring. Cunningham was born in England and has lived in Denmark since 1994, but had to close his previous restaurant, The Paul, in 2011 after developing a blood clot in his shoulder and being diagnosed with stress-related anxiety.

He sat down for a candid conver-

sation about New Nordic cuisine, mental health in the restaurant industry, why he turned down a role at Noma, and the secret of his success at the restaurant he affectionately calls "our Henne".

Congratulations on the second star. Can you describe what you're doing at Henne?

I use the best rhubarb I can get, the best butter I can get, the best herbs I can get. I'm not a big forager, but every chef would give their right arm to have a restaurant situated

in this area. We don't forage because if things don't taste nice, I'm not going to serve it. I'm not going to serve you a dish with wood sorrel if I don't want to eat it myself. I'm a very egotistical chef. I cook for myself. I cook physically for my guests, but I've always cooked very selfishly, because I cook food I want to eat myself. I would love to sit here and eat a little bit of roast chicken and some really nice buttery potatoes and some crumble for dessert. There's got to be space for that. This is a nice relaxed place, but

one shouldn't expect fireworks, because that's not what we do. This is a 200-year-old thatched coaching inn, in the middle of nowhere. And I like that.

Have the Michelin stars changed anything?

When we got the first star, we got a lot of people expecting white gloves and chefs' hats. And when I walked in wearing baggy old pants and a pair of slippers, some people just didn't get it. But I think people are relaxing a lot more. We're

James Clasper



Anders Schoenemann

Paul Cunningham.

not going to change for the sake of change.

But do you feel extra pressure to keep the two stars?

Obviously, but not from the guide, more from the guests. They have expectations, very high expectations, from what they've seen in newspapers and on social media. But we got the second star for what we did before, not for what we're going to do tomorrow.

Tell me about what you call the flip-side of the industry—the negative impact on mental health?

The stress is always there, because you're constantly performing, you're constantly on. You're not always on edge, but you are constantly being judged – by diners, by critics, by restaurant guides – and no matter how much you say you're not affected by them, you are. I recently went to my doctor and said I could feel it creeping back. He said I should speak to someone else, so I was referred to

There are some incredible places to eat in Copenhagen, but there are loads of lousy places where you think, "For god's sake, you can't take that amount of money."

someone who could help me more. I spoke to someone for two hours the other day and think it's amazing. And it's a fact of being honest. I've had anxiety for about six years, and it gets worse and better, worse and better. I just need to get control of it. You have to learn to control it – to be friends with it. You have to go through it and not take the easy way out. The first thing I did this morning was pull the staff together and tell them what's going on, and why I'm weird every now and then, because I've got issues. If I'm not honest with them, they're going to think I'm an ogre.

Tell me about Noma. Its founder Claus Meyer asked you to head up the kitchen, right?

Noma didn't exist at that point. Claus phoned and said he had an idea. I went round to his and sat in his kitchen, and he had all this paperwork spread out over the table. We sat and talked for days, and I thought the idea was amazing, but it didn't make sense for an English

guy to do it. I said he needed a Nordic chef, and recommended two. One was René Redzepi. I knew at that point that I would never have been able to put myself in that Nordic box.

Do you see yourself as part of the New Nordic movement?

I'm a 'locavore' – this is a local kitchen with local ingredients, but I spice my kitchen with my travels because I've travelled far too much not be inspired by pickled seaweed in Japan, or roasted spices in Goa, or Parisian asparagus. I travel shitloads. We're always travelling, and out of season we travel an awful lot more. And I think it would be wrong of me not to be inspired by other cuisines. I've always done that.

What's your take on the state of the New Nordic kitchen?

It has become a monoculture. It irritates the life out of me when you get some knob opening a restaurant when he's picked herbs at No-

ma for three months and wants to get six Michelin stars in the first year. That irritates the life out of me because it's childish. I mean, don't you think further than the end of your nose? And it's really problematic when everyone does the same stuff, day in day out, and no matter what restaurant you go to, you know you're going to get the same food and the same wine pairings.

Is Copenhagen's scene overrated?

I've always said it is. It's overrated because it's watered down and sells itself incredibly well. There are some incredible places to eat in Copenhagen, but there are loads of lousy places as well, where you think, "For god's sake, you can't take that amount of money and tell people it's some sort of biodynamic organic carrot that's been excreted from Farmer Giles' bottom, when you know and I know you bought it down the market and it's been lying in a box for three weeks." And there's a lot of that going on. **M**

When artists chase funding, they lose sight of their work

Artistic director of Dansehallerne EFVA LILJA argues that contemporary dance remains underfunded, despite its vast potential as an artistic platform

After more than 20 years working in Swedish and European cultural politics as an advocate of the arts – and of dance in particular – Efva Lilja joined Copenhagen's Dansehallerne in 2016 as its artistic director. Alongside her ongoing work as an artist and researcher, she's been involved in a range of international initiatives, such as the European Commission's New Narrative for Europe. The Murmur talked to her about the state of contemporary dance and her plans for Dansehallerne.

How would you describe the situation of contemporary dance in Denmark at the moment?

Everything is short-term and project-based, so I seriously think there needs to be a discussion about continuity in relation to the

quality of the work – how can we develop an art form without sustainable platforms that can provide continuity and enable in-depth work? If you always have to work in a project-based way, you are constantly occupied with the immediate results of your project in the market place: selling and getting good reviews. You easily lose touch with questions that are fundamental to your work. When I talk to artists, they often express a desperate need for deeper working processes and collegial networks, which are some of the things we are now trying to develop and secure at Dansehallerne. But we are just one venue in Denmark, and we are so poorly financed. We have to convince both politicians and civil servants of the benefits of investing in more contemporary choreographic performative art.

I also experience that the infrastructure for presenting and touring dance is poor in

There is nothing like Dansehallerne in the other Nordic countries. Denmark should be proud of that.

Franziska Bork-Petersen

Denmark. Dansehallerne is a leading institution, providing 180 performances in Copenhagen every year, and another 300 performances for kids around the country. But we only reach a few regular locations. What about the adults in their schools? What kind of relationships, expectations or prejudices do they have towards the art of dance? When they go home and talk about their experiences, what relationship do their parents have with the art form? For most of them, probably none. Dance is just not there. If you take literature, film, music or visual art, it's everywhere. When we exclude dance, we exclude options to relate to cultural identity, cultural heritage, and bodily expressions of the self and of the other.

How does this compare to other Scandinavian countries?

Danish politicians often highlight the fact that Denmark invests more in culture per capita than Sweden. I would like us to look at the distribution of this money and reallocate some funds – in comparison to other artistic fields, dance is clearly a very low priority. Dansehallerne has less than half of what a theatre institution of similar size has, and less than a quarter of what Dansens Hus in Stockholm gets, or the same institution in Oslo – just to run their venues.

Another major difference is that individual artists are selected for support by Scenekunststudvalget [the municipality's theatre arts committee] and provided with resources to rent space from Dansehallerne. This has problematic curatorial consequences: why should a committee of people, most of whom have a very limited knowledge of the contemporary dance scene, decide what is shown at Dansehallerne? Whenever we want to invite the local community in, or seek other forms of input, we have to find other money. There is no basic funding for our programming. It's a little like being an independent artist – I feel like I am back in the 90s, running my own company. Dansehallerne could be a much stronger actor in the field and for the field if we had better basic funding. Now I am trying to attract European money to find ways of supporting the artists here in a proper way.

In terms of the production of contempo-

Håkan Larsson



Efva Lilja

rary dance, Dansehallerne differs from most other institutions, since we don't house a specific company. We are a workplace for around 200 artists, who every year train, rehearse, produce and present with us. This makes us an important forum for the development of contemporary choreographic performative art. There is nothing like Dansehallerne in the other Nordic countries. Denmark should be proud of that.

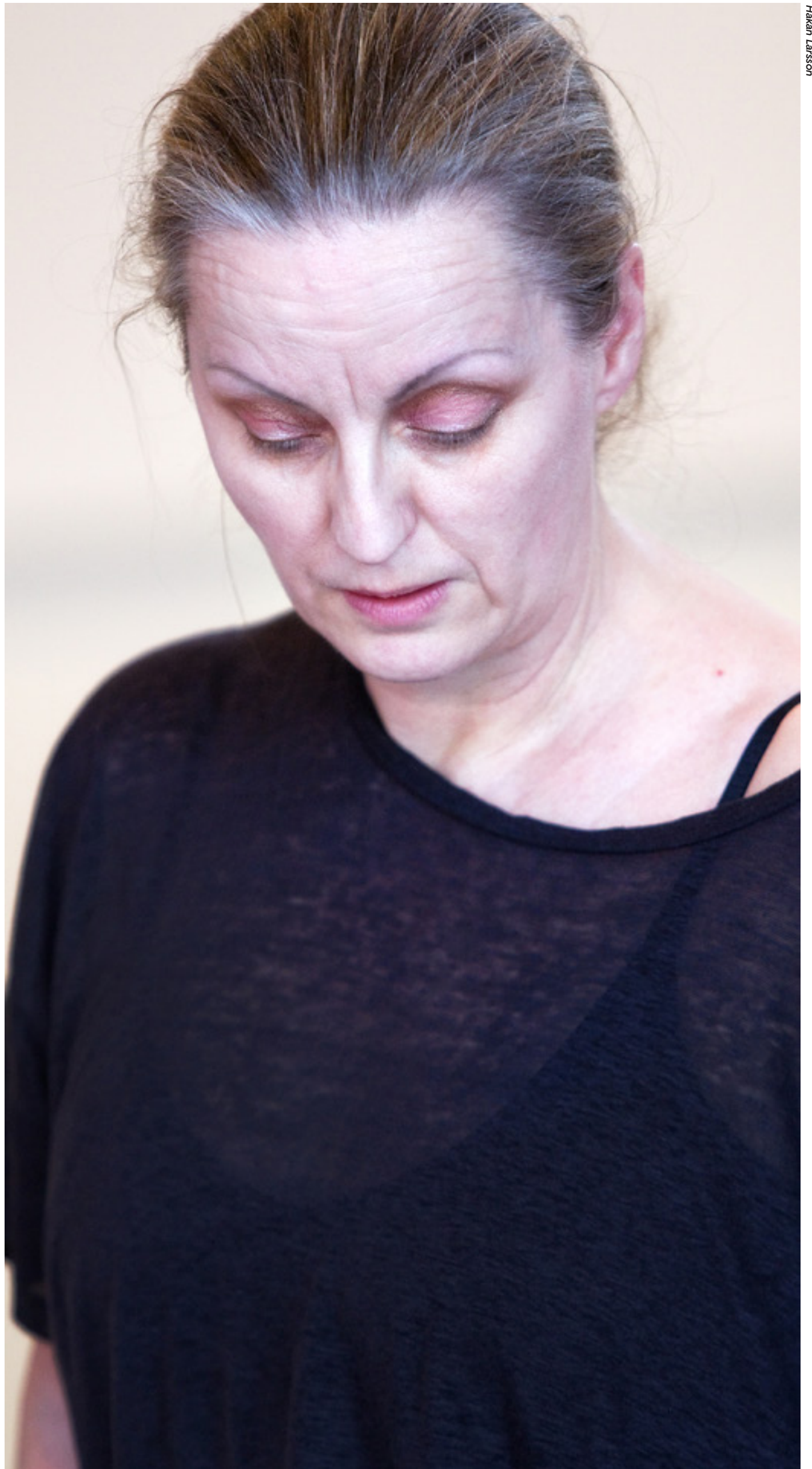
Some months ago, you talked about your vision for Dansehallerne as a 'national resource'. What do you mean by that?

I would like to stimulate and challenge the community of artists by inviting artists from other genres who work with choreography. This spring season, we had a visual artist who worked with movement in colours. Last year, we invited composers who worked with the choreography of sound, light, thinking, and leadership. What does it do to us if we are confronted with this multitude of perspectives?

By addressing these questions we develop new methodologies, types of performances, and ways of attracting an audience. We are already trying to stimulate this kind of work through the monthly series of talks that I host and anyone can come to: 'Meet, Eat and Talk'. There are always some artists, but all sorts of people just drop by – we've had some young ballet dancers from the Royal Danish Ballet School. And these different perspectives and ways of looking at the field of dance not only change our own awareness, but also help us attract a new audience.

When Dansehallerne moves into its new permanent premises in Kedelhuset, Copenhagen, in 2018, it will enable us to expand our residency programme, Dansehallerne Artists Research Lab and Residency Programme. The programme allows us to benefit from the exciting environment of artistic development processes and research taking place in Europe.

We are also opening an inter-disciplinary workplace that draws on academic disciplines as an important element in the process and development of choreography and its dialogue with our audiences. This is all very exciting, but a lot of things remain to be solved, not least the issue of funding. **M**



Efva Lilja

A Haven

for creative expression

AARON DESSNER from The National has teamed up with chef Claus Meyer and brewer Mikkel Borg Bjergsø to create a festival, Haven, that celebrates good music, food and beer. Ahead of its launch this August, Dessner sat down to talk about the origins of the festival, why The National has a political position, and the things that Denmark is doing right – but why Danes shouldn't be complacent

For the past two decades, Grammy-nominated band The National has filled the airwaves with its melancholic indie-tunes and poetic lyrics – lyrics that often unveil a deep layer of existential Weltschmerz and political frustration with the underbelly of American consumer society.

They're well known in Denmark, not least because The National's principal songwriter Aaron Dessner happened to fall in love with a

Danish woman, with whom he has two small children. Now his connection to Denmark is set to get even stronger, as Dessner embarks on some Danish musical entrepreneurship.

"I'm sorry, I'm a little hung over," he says as he opens the front door of a massive Frederiksberg home.

Originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, Dessner partially relocated to Denmark after meeting his wife Stine. The family alternates between

Words:

Hana Hasanbegovic

Photos:

Rasmus Degnbol

Copenhagen and a farmhouse in upstate New York, where Aaron records with the rest of the band. They just wrapped their new studio album, *Sleep Well Beast*, which is set to be released in the autumn.

Before then, Dessner will premiere a brand new festival in Copenhagen, Haven, that will take place in the post-industrial setting of Refshaleøen over two days in August, and will bring together music, food and beer.



In addition to his own band, Dessner has managed to snare a number of high-class acts to perform, including Band of Horses, Beach House and Bon Iver. The food and beer are being organised by his collaborators Mikkel Borg Bjergsø, co-founder of the microbrewery Mikkeller, and culinary entrepreneur Claus Meyer, who is widely recognised as the founder of New Nordic Cuisine.

It's actually Meyer's house that we are sitting in now.

"I definitely didn't buy this house! Claus bought it about 30 years ago. There's a stable in the backyard! Upstairs there are five or six bedrooms. When I'm alone here, I lose it – like, yesterday, I lost my shoe and couldn't find it until this morning," Dessner says jokingly while sipping his coffee.

A BIT OF A BUBBLE

Despite having lived in Denmark for several years, Dessner still feels out of place around Danes.

"People are good at English, but it's odd because the better they know you socially, the more inclined they are to switch immediately to Danish as soon as you walk away from the table. And then you feel a bit on the outside," he says about his experience with Danish friends.

"It's not the same as in New York. I'll be in New York with friends, and literally no one except me was born in the country, but the whole society is a melting pot – it's easier to feel at home," he says.

"I understand Danish really well, but I just can't really have a conversation. Except with my kids. My five-year-old is fully fluent in both languages. She laughs at me when I speak Danish and she teaches me. She says, 'Daddy, what do you want to know?' I know enough Danish to act like I know a lot and then I'll screw up and she'll just start laughing. It's not an easy language. When I hear people from Jutland it's easier – it's just the Copenhagen thing that's hard."

But it's not only love that brought him to Denmark, it's also the politics – more precisely, the Danish social system.

"The USA is the wealthiest country in the world, and we don't have a basic social system that's functioning," he points out matter-of-factly.

"I pay a lot of tax and do everything right,

I'll be in New York with friends and literally no one except me is born in the country.



but the schools where we live are not good, we have no healthcare because we live somewhere rural, and I don't have a normal job, so getting healthcare for my kids is kind of complex. So when you're married to someone who comes from a country that has this amazing social democracy that's functioning..." he trails off.

"The decisions you make here in Denmark are not driven entirely by money or worrying about going bankrupt. It feels like a socially healthier environment. People are more content. There aren't the same extremes as you see in America," he says, but quickly points out that he simultaneously feels conflicted because he has a sense of responsibility to engage with the problems back home.

"Denmark is a much safer, cleaner, more environmentally-conscious place. The fact that

people ride their bikes everywhere, the fact that you're the leaders in wind power, and that the tap water is really good. You take it for granted, but I feel like it's an unusual thing," he says.

Dessner doesn't feel that Danes always understand the gravity of the problems that the United States faces. He also finds that they tend to shy away from talking about politics with him.

"I feel like it's a little bit of a bubble in Denmark. It's not that people disregard the politics, but sometimes it feels like you can't share that feeling of what's going on in the United States."

MISTER NOVEMBER

The members of The National have made a



Aaron Dessner

41 years old, grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Graduated from Columbia University in 1998, where he studied Modern European History.

Multi-instrumentalist and songwriter in The National, together with twin brother Bryce, Matt Berninger, Bryan Devendorf and Scott Devendorf.

Has a Danish wife and two children, age two and five.

point of identifying as politically active since the band's inception almost two decades ago. They have supported the presidential campaigns of Democratic candidates – the Obama campaign used their song Fake Empire for an election video – and they have raised money for range of causes, from HIV to civil rights.

"There's almost a responsibility to speak up for what you believe in when you have an audience," Dessner says.

The 9/11 terror attacks also had an impact on the band, taking place just a week before their very first tour. Dessner says he witnessed fear and anxiety arise across the country, and argues these were channelled by the Bush administration to push an agenda whose repercussions the world is still feeling.

"That political environment can be seen in all of our albums. Very early on, we decided that we needed to be engaged with charitable work. Right now it's focused on helping people who are going to be active targets of the Trump administration – so women's rights, refugees and immigrant issues," Dessner says.

"Most important is Planned Parenthood, because they are defunding it," he says, referring to the non-profit organisation that supplies reproductive care to millions of women every year. It is also the largest provider of abortion services in the US, making it a primary target of pro-life groups.

"Donald Trump is putting millions of women's health at risk by defunding Planned Parenthood, because they won't be able to get cervical and breast cancer screenings. I can pay for my wife and my daughter, but a lot of people in communities all over the country can't. And the people who are doing this are wealthy, white men. It's totally fucked up. Trump is a grotesque example of all the things that are wrong with our celebrity culture," he says, adding that symptoms of American populism are becoming increasingly evident in Denmark too.

"I know that beneath the surface, some of the same things and intentions that are play-

Denmark is a much safer, cleaner more environmentally-conscious place. The fact that people ride their bikes everywhere, the fact that you're the leaders in wind power and that the tap water is really good. You take it for granted, but I feel like it's an unusual thing.

ing out on a massive scale in the United States are here as well – the anti-immigrant policies and the Danish People's Party. I mean, it's a pretty xenophobic party. But nothing here comes close to what the Republicans are doing to America."

HAVEN

Haven was borne out of his experiences touring with The National for almost 20 years and growing tired of playing the same type of events – another muddy field or another urban setting. He wanted to create a new kind of experience.

"Certain festivals are cultural phenomena, like Roskilde or Glastonbury, it's a rite of passage for people of a certain age. But as an artist, it gets boring," he explains, adding that a few years ago he started to collaborate and experiment in creating new types of events with people from different artistic disciplines and crafts.

"In a way, Haven is my way of engaging with Copenhagen and connecting with the community," Dessner says about his new endeavour.

"I've become friends with Claus and Mikkel over the years through music. I have a lot of re-

spect for their sense of craftsmanship. It was an opportunity to create almost a lab or a living installation, where we go into an environment where there's a lot of innovation and inspiration happening in different mediums. And that seems like an interesting way to spend a few days for the artist and the audience. It's a 'haven' for creative expression. A festival for the senses – it's more than just bands on the stage. Hopefully, over time, we can give Danish underground musicians the opportunity to perform."

It remains to be seen whether people will choose to go to Haven over any of the other dozens of festivals in Denmark over the summer. But Dessner doesn't see Haven as competing in the festival marketplace. Rather, he sees Haven as a community of people who will come together in a village of multi-disciplinary activities.

"What's happening in the beer and food world is as significant as what's going to happen musically. I'm excited about connecting with people from all fields. It's a step beyond anything we've ever done before," he concludes, now looking considerably less hungover. **M**

ABOUT HAVEN

A festival bringing beer, food, art and music together in a new way. Musicians, chefs, artists, brewers will be working together in a crossover of disciplines – inviting guests to do the same.

MUSIC: The National, Band of Horses, Beach House, Bon Iver, Iggy Pop, Iceage, Liss, SBTRKT, When Saints Go Machine and many more.

WHEN: August 12-13

WHERE: Refshaleøen

MORE INFO: havenkbh.dk



Aaron Dessner, centre, and flanked by Mikkel Borg Bjergsø, left, and Claus Meyer. The three are organising Haven together.

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The feeling of completely falling in love with music has never left me

A 25-year-old producer has been tasked with creating the score for a 400-year-old play. But despite his young age, Mike Sheridan has already arrived at a stage in his career where he feels ready to take on the challenge of creating the soundscape for one of Denmark's most important theatrical events – Hamlet at Kronborg

In the summer of 2008, Distortion morphed from an underground dance music festival into a popular celebration of dance music and club culture. Tens of thousands of young people descended on the city for the free street parties, wearing neon clothes and cheap oversized sunglasses that they kept on indoors.

Before then, electronic music was still a niche phenomenon, performed in small and non-descript clubs around the city. I remember one night a year earlier in the basement bar Vertigo on Amagertorv in central Copenhagen. It was early but packed with club kids, groupies of the superstar producer Anders Trentemøller who, then in his early 30s, had begun to develop a cult following.

Standing beside him was a young man just fifteen years old. His father sat at the nearby bar, slowly drinking a pint for the duration of his son's set.

The young man was Mike Sheridan, a Danish DJ and producer who signed his first record deal at age 14, released his first album at 15, and played his first major solo concert in the luxurious DR Koncerthuset at just 21.

"I was still living at home. I went home after playing in front

I was lying on the back seat with a golden retriever puppy, and on the radio, DR was broadcasting a live set from the Sónar festival in Barcelona. It was a completely perfect memory. I heard these amazing sounds that were new to me, and it just made sense.

Peter Stanners

of 1100 paying guests in the most beautiful concert hall to sleep in the cellar."

Now 25, he owns an apartment in Nørrebro, where we meet again almost nine years after that night at Vertigo. He leans against the kitchen wall with his feet up on the counter top, and plays with his scruffy dark hair. Across the hallway is a home studio of sorts – a jumble of computers and synthesizers – and in the corner stands a special instrument made of glass, which produces an otherworldly space music that reverberates the soul.

But it's not a studio, he explains. More like a writing room – a place to experiment and forge sounds that he's dreamed up.

"As far back as I can remember, I would categorise sounds I heard in my head, as though I were building a vocabulary. When I went to sleep, I would imagine sounds, which I realised later on was rather normal for people who made music," says Sheridan.

He is now in the process of producing the score for Hamlet at this summer's Shakespeare Festival, one of his most challenging and ambitious projects to date. The production, to be performed on HamletScenen outside Kronborg Castle in Helsingør, where Shakespeare set the play over 400 years

ago, is the kind of challenge that Sheridan's career has been building toward.

"I've been working my way towards something like this task. It's not something you can do when you're fifteen, because you don't have a proper sense of your own musicality. It's very demanding, because you have to use all the tools in your toolbox to tell a story. You can tell a story with images, or tell it with sound. And with a story that's been told for hundreds of years, there are going to be elements that transcend history and that can be told through any musical language," Sheridan explains.

A DREAM JOB

The way Sheridan talks about writing the score, it's clear it's a dream job for him. For despite his youth, he's put in years of work to get here.

It started around age eight, when his dad gave him a trial subscription to ACID, a popular electronic music software. He spent a year toying with the built-in samples and songs, learning how to rearrange and remix, but it was when he and a friend figured out how to record their own sounds that things finally clicked, and he understood the potential the software held.

For while Sheridan is producer

of electronic music, and largely relies on software and technology to create his music, he isn't interested in the technology and gear for its own sake – it's just a means to an end. His love was for music itself, sitting for hours listening to the radio and his parents records.

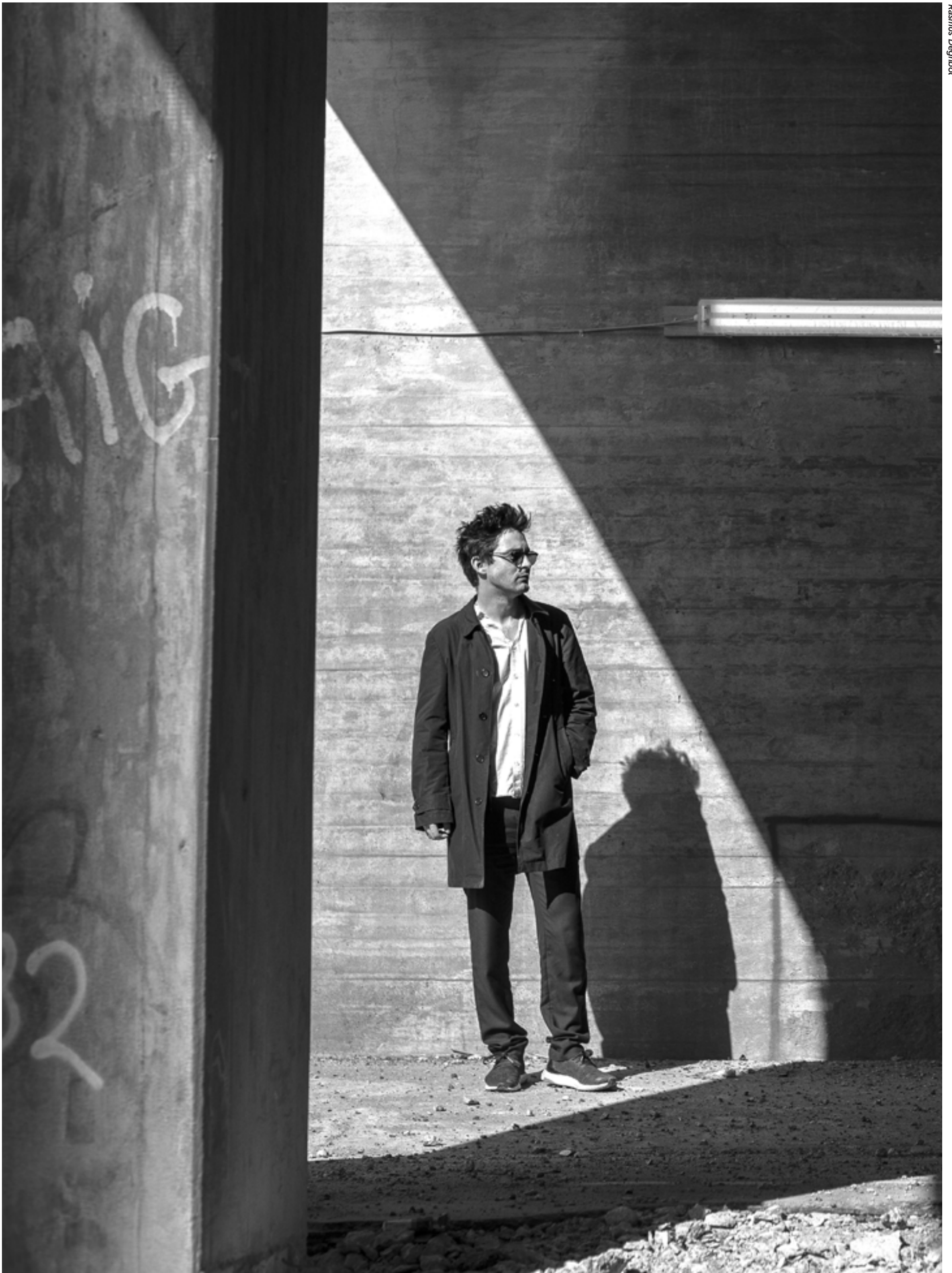
"When I first heard electronic music, pure electronic sounds, it blew my mind. It was 2004, and we were driving across Denmark on a family holiday. I was lying on the back seat with a golden retriever puppy, and on the radio, DR was broadcasting a live set from the Sónar festival in Barcelona. It was a completely perfect memory. I heard these amazing sounds that were new to me, and it just made sense. And from then on, I didn't have a doubt about what I wanted to do," he says.

"The feeling of completely falling in love with music has never left me."

TEEN PROFESSIONAL

Sheridan started composing music on his father's Dell stationary computer, running an early version of the Ableton music software. The specs were awful, and the computer slow. But he was hooked, and his musical ambitions soon started to overshadow his academic performance.

"School for me was a long hard stretch that I only learned to ap-





preciate long afterward," he says.

"I was completely taken with music, and sat at the back of the classroom and listened to music on my headphones. It was perfect. I wasn't bad at school, but my math was terrible. I have no problem with logic, but as soon as I have to put it into numbers, I am illiterate. It's annoying, because it makes it hard to make sense of musical notation."

By age 14, after playing a few concerts and DJ gigs, he had saved enough money to buy a Macbook laptop, which gave him the processing power he needed to produce his first EP. It was released just before his ninth grade exams – the end of lower secondary school – and he was subsequently invited on a popular late night TV talk show alongside Else Marie Pade, a legendary Danish electronic music pioneer who was in her late 70s at the time.

The appearance caught the eye of the general public, and his Myspace music page exploded from a few thousand listens, to almost half a million. After the summer holiday he started high school, but dropped out after only six months to focus on producing his first album.

By the time he was 15, he was DJing professionally and soon became a fixture in the Danish nightlife. At his peak, he played 140 DJ gigs in a year, and by the time he was 21 – when he stopped counting – he had played over 700 DJ gigs and 200 live concerts.

I am vain and want to play places that show my abilities at their peak performance. I think what I create is valuable, and it's not valuable to be in clubs that are poorly designed when you want to go to the next level.

"I've been to so many clubs and parties where things were just fun and fucked up. It was nice to observe these things and have beers with your friends and go to a concert, or to one party and then another. But I was always out for the music, not the party," he says.

His break with DJing arrived slowly, as he became increasingly frustrated with the working conditions.

"I am vain and want to play places that show my abilities at their peak performance. I think what I create is valuable, and it's not valuable to be in clubs that are poorly designed when you want to take it to the next level. I don't want to be playing somewhere where the conditions for providing a proper level of quality is unrealistic. In the end it affects the experience of the audience, and then I'd rather pursue other dreams and experiences."

CREATING LIVING MUSIC

Sheridan has been referred to as a precocious talent for years. In 2011, ahead of his show at Koncerthuset, state broadcaster DR wrote, "Mike Sheridan is a rare example of a true prodigy."

And sure, Sheridan has demonstrated enormous musical talent from a very young age. But what sets him apart from his peers, what stopped him from falling into the self-aggrandising and self-satisfying nightclub world, is his discipline and approach to learning – the strategies, methodologies and

processes that enabled him to produce his work.

For example, this is how he explains why he doesn't want to be photographed in front of the electronic gear in his living room.

"I've never been an instrument fetishist. It's never been a goal for me to own something because it's a gimmick or because it's expensive. I am investing time in exploring instruments for their sounds. But when you fetishise instruments, your mind focuses on technology, and that's not really creating music, that's indulgence," he says.

Instead, he has instrumentalised his electronic tools as a way to make particular sounds that he can use to create music with soul.

"I remember listening to my favourite records that sounded live, but everything I made sounded dead. There was no performance. I was always stuck in front of the computer and started to think, what other sorts of sounds are out there, what sorts of machines exist in this world? I always had an appreciation of the passionate exploration of sound. It has been a natural progression for me working, from working exclusively with computers in the past to seek new acoustic and electronic tools that I can use to express my musicality."

A BEAUTIFUL PROCESS

Sheridan's methodical and disciplined approach to his craft might explain how he managed to cope with the pressure of being an ad-

olescent DJ and producer, heaped with praise and expectations. And how now, faced with the challenge of producing the score to one of Denmark's most important theatrical events, he relishes the opportunity.

"I have my tools, I know my sound world, I still wake up and hear things in my head and want to try them out. In a story like Hamlet, I look at the different layers of storytelling, the interactions between the characters, and try and superimpose emotions onto the different parts of the story. I create sounds and atmospheres that return at different parts of the play that communicate specific emotional meaning addressed by the subconscious."

He's not the only young Danish talent to be drafted into this year's run. 32-year-old Cyron Melville is playing Hamlet, while 29-year-old Natalie Madueño stars as Ophelia. With two months to go before it opens on August 1, Sheridan has plenty of time to test his ideas with the cast during rehearsals.

"It's definitely a prime example of a situation in which I can use everything I am capable of. It is a real pleasure to build a sonic DNA already from the raw script together with the director. It's just a very beautiful process." **M**

Hamlet will be performed during the Shakespeare Festival from August 1 to 19. For tickets or more information, visit: hamletscenen.dk

I don't want to make museum theatre

Bo Nymann Pedersen



Lars Romann Engel is artistic director of HamletScenen and directed this year's performance.

Hamlet is one of the world's best-known plays. This summer at Kronborg Castle, director [Lars Romann Engel](#) is staging an original and cutting-edge performance that he hopes will bring the 400-year-old play into the modern world



Søren Meisner

Cyron Melville (right) plays Hamlet, while Natalie Madueño is Ophelia. Both are young up and coming Danish actors.

OVER 400 YEARS AGO, Prince Hamlet stalked the corridors of Kronborg Castle, pondering whether he should kill his uncle in revenge for murdering his father and seizing the throne. William Shakespeare's play may be fiction, but the setting is not. Kronborg Castle still stands by the coast in Helsingør, where Hamlet has been performed since at least 1816.

For the past decade, the performances have taken place as part of the Shakespeare Festival and been hosted by HamletScenen. It's a unique setting – an open-air theatre on the grounds of Kronborg Castle. Before the performance, guests can eat at a restaurant on the castle ramparts, or buy a quality picnic to eat al fresco.

This year's performance of Hamlet, which runs from August 1 to 19, features two young Danish actors in the lead roles of Hamlet and Ophelia – Cyron Melville and Natalie Madueño – while 25-year-old electronic music producer Mike Sheridan will create the score.

We spoke to Lars Romann Engel, the play's director as well as

CEO and artistic director of HamletScenen, about this year's performance.

How does this show break with the way Hamlet is traditionally told?

It's important to make Shakespeare performances relevant and interesting to a modern audience. This is obviously a young cast filling the younger roles – but the whole approach that we take is very young. I don't want to make museum theatre. The old tradition in the UK is very conservative, as it's more dangerous for them to modernise the play. But we can do it because we are outside the UK and have a different mentality – the rules for us are different.

Was this also why you chose to include a young producer such as Mike?

We have Mike Sheridan composing a full score for the performance. He makes ambient electronic music, and will create soundscapes surrounding the performance, like a film score. I think our approach is a bit unusual. Normally, in old plays

HAMLET

The Shakespeare Festival 2017

August 1 - 19
Starts at 20:00

English with Danish subtitles

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Kronborg 13,
Helsingør

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hamletscenen.dk

such as these, the actors themselves will play music on instruments from the time, and sing and dance. That's very much in the tradition of the Globe Theatre in London, where Shakespeare's plays were first shown.

But what we are putting on hasn't been done before – the modern music is of course a strong and powerful contrast to the script.

How did you get involved with HamletScenen?

I put on a performance of Hamlet in 2004 that was really well received. So Helsingør municipality decided to offer us support, and in 2008 they helped establish HamletScenen, where I was employed as CEO and artistic director. I've spent the last ten years building it up through the annual Shakespeare Festival, which presents old and new takes on the playwright.

It's important to keep challenging him, and we have a loyal audience that comes here to see his work. So our festival is divided between maintaining a respect for

history, and challenging the way we interpret him. We are also supported by the London Globe Theatre, which has been collaborating with us for the past six years.

The performance of Hamlet is in English – how do you make sure that the Danish audience really appreciates what is taking place?

What I'm looking to create are powerful stage performances, so by using the right theatrical language, the audience has an easy time understanding what's going on with the characters. We also project Danish subtitles just above the middle of the stage, like at the opera, which people are used to.

What does the future of HamletScenen look like?

This is our first internationally-produced production, and much of the cast is foreign. It's part of the plan to work more internationally, so we are opening up HamletScenen to be the centre of a global collaboration – I want Kronborg Castle to become the hub for meetings about Shakespeare. **M**

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Different options

Copenhagen Cards are available in 24, 48, 72 and 120 hour options. The most popular is the 72 hour card, which costs 659 kroner for an adult and 329 kroner for a child (ages 10-15). You can also bring along two kids under age 10, per adult card, for free! You also get a free guide book to help you get around the city. Or how about down-

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Louisiana is a world class gallery with views over the Øresund, just 40 minutes up the coast.



The best way to see the Copenhagen's historic sites is on a canal boat tour – a great day out for tourists and residents alike.

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OUT OF THE FRAME, off the page

The 'grandmother of performance art', MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ, is taking up residency in Copenhagen this summer with a major retrospective at Louisiana and a new installation at the Royal Library. We met the curators of both exhibitions to learn more about the way Abramović's work unsettles our typical understanding of art and literature, and how static viewers become active participants

WE NORMALLY think of galleries and libraries as places that host physical objects – a stockpile of memorabilia that can be revisited, considered and admired. They are spaces for looking at, rather than touching and interacting with, objects.

But performance artist Marina Abramović challenges this conventional relationship between the viewer and piece of art – and the reader and a book – with two exhibitions in Copenhagen this summer.

From June 17, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art will exhibit the first major retrospective of Abramović's work in Europe, entitled *The Cleaner*. Only four days later, The Royal Library will open a collaboration between Abramović and its permanent collection at the modern extension, the, Black Diamond, entitled *Abramović Method for Treasures*.

Much of Abramović's work is about presence and the subtle interaction between the artist and her audience. So Tine Colstrup, who curated *The Cleaner* at Louisiana, had to recreate a physical interaction between the audience and recordings of Abramović's performance pieces: typically video, audio, and photographs.

The inverse is true at the library, however, where Abramović is extracting the content from physical books to create an interaction with the audience. In both gallery and library, the viewer is

MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ IN COPENHAGEN

The Cleaner

A major retrospective of Abramović's early concept sketches, paintings and sound pieces to presentations of the artist's performances up until today.

Louisiana Museum of Modern Art

Opens June 17

Abramović Method for Treasures

Taking Kierkegaard, Saxo's chronicles of Danish history, and the observations of Tycho Brahe as her starting point, Abramović has created an immersive total installation that includes a range of rituals, an audio system and specially designed shelves for people.

The Royal Library, the Black Diamond

Opens June 21

asked to reconsider how they interact with a book, and what they consider 'art'.

VIOLENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

Contemporary and performance artists have long sought to unsettle the laws of the gallery space – the 'white cube' – taking the focus away from what is within the frame and looking instead at the body of the artist and, by extension, the viewer.

Tine Colstrup explains that performance art, and even the recordings themselves, are not a typical gallery experience.

"Performance art highlights tensions between people and pain and anger and gender politics, war and suffering, in a different way than what we typically experience in a gallery."

Serbian-born Marina Abramović has labelled herself 'the grandmother of performance art', and has pioneered the genre since the 1970s, using her body as the primary material of her work. Her early work tended towards the violent, and her first publicly-performed piece, in 1973, involved her blindly stabbing between, and often at, her fingers.

Since then, she has walked half the length of the Great Wall of China to meet – and break up with – her long-term partner and collaborator Ulay. She has fasted for twelve days as a 'living installation' at the Sean Kelly Gallery in New York. She's invited strangers to use 72 objects – including a load-

ed gun – on her in any way they want. In 1997, she was awarded a Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale for *Balkan Baroque*, in which she spent six days attempting to clean the blood from a pile of cow bones, representing the enduring stains of war on her own country.

"There are two very central currents running through her work – violence and a silent, more spiritual track," says Colstrup.

"But within these two veins, the rite of passage and catharsis are two very central concepts for her. At Louisiana, for example, our title *The Cleaner* represents the many works that deal with cleansing or cleaning or cleaning out and going from one stage to another."

In selecting works for the exhibition, Colstrup worked in collaboration with curator Lena Essling from Moderna Museet in Stockholm, where an adapted version of the exhibition has already been on display. Colstrup has described the exhibition as a very classical chronological retrospective, in that it moves from Abramović's early work to her contemporary pieces, and has also grown in collaboration with the artist.

What makes an exhibition like this so challenging to curate is that much of Abramović's more recent work no longer relies on her own body. Colstrup therefore has to recreate the intimacy and dialogue with the participants in her pieces, but without her physical presence.

"Performance art is built in a

paradox: it's live and it's here and now, a real body in real space. Yet video and photography have always been performance art's best friends."

Colstrup has deliberately avoided a presentation limited to the headphones and 1970s TV monitors that typically accompany Abramović's early work, and instead presents videos of these performances as large projections to imply a kind of body that is not there. One trilogy of pieces, entitled *Freeing the Voice*, *Freeing the Memory* and *Freeing the Body*, will be projected in close proximity, so the sound naturally flows between the three.

But it was important to the museum, and to Abramović herself, to use 'live bodies' as well as the documentation of her earlier performances. Both *Freeing the Voice* – a piece in which a woman screams until she loses her voice – and *Imponderabilia* – in which a naked man and woman stand on each side of a doorway, forcing guests to squeeze between them – will be performed while the exhibition is open, the latter every day.

"Performance art always takes place live, in the here and now – we all know the difference between attending a live concert and seeing it on video. We all know the feeling when the energy in the room is really intense versus other times when it is flat. This is what the now is all about. We are in the situation together, and it is everyone's contribution that creates the situation."



Marina Abramović in 'The Hero', which is among the performances that will be shown at Louisiana during the retrospective of her work, 'The Cleaner', which is running from June 17 to August 22.

Colstrup is particularly excited about the unknowns of this exhibition, and the fact that it will be shaped by the visitors themselves.

"We do not know how the audience will react and, in the re-performance of *Imponderabilia*, whether people will feel comfortable or not, or what will the dialogue be. We will only really know as it happens, and it will change minute to minute."

STAGING RITUALS

But it is not just in the gallery that this curation of spontaneous reactions can be powerfully felt. For several years, the Black Diamond has collaborated with artists in order to make their hard-to-exhibit treasures – the rare books that are kept untouched behind glass – more accessible.

Spearheading this collaboration is Christina Back, exhibition architect at the Royal Library, who thought Abramović could create new and exciting dialogues – not between performer and audience, but between book and audience.

While previous artistic collab-

There are two very central currents running through her work – violence and a silent, more spiritual track.

TINE COLSTRUP, CURATOR OF THE CLEANER

Emily Tait

orations have focussed on visually presenting the contents of the books, with Abramović it quickly became clear that she was going to create a new method of interacting with books altogether, and in so doing create a connection between visitor and the precious objects locked behind glass.

Last year, Abramović visited the library to see the exhibition space and hear experts talk about the kinds of treasures she could work with. She was also given a list of the library's treasures she could use, and she read them all – from Kierkegaard to Karen Blixen, from ancient medical textbooks to Nordic Sagas – declaring she wanted it all and more.

"She is not staging the objects, but staging rituals that will create new connections with these objects," says Back.

"We want to unfold the stories of the Royal Library. We want to show the amazing treasures and we want to the public to connect to them. And I know that Marina Abramović, in developing this pro-

cess, has the same goal. She really wants young people to slow down and reclaim the possibilities of connecting to wonderful literature."

The result is the *Abramović Method for Treasures*, an immersive exhibition space that can only host 17 visitors at a time. When you arrive, you hand in your digital possessions – your phone and your watch – to detach from time, and in return you receive a specially-designed audio system: black, simple, with just one button. You take off your shoes and walk onto a carpet that she has selected, then lie down on specially-designed human shelves to be engulfed by an audio experience featuring her voice and the voices of the books.

"What is so fascinating to us is that the object is not the main part – it is much more about relationships. She develops rituals that create a condition, and there will be several ways of understanding what is happening. The understanding of the artwork is given to the visitor. And for us, this is what has been lacking at the library – the visitor having a

personal connection."

Back says the Black Diamond exhibition is supposed to say to the visitor, "Here is something that is not there." Between Louisiana and the Black Diamond, the visitor will interact with things that are not there: the memory of Abramović's performance pieces from the 1970s, the content of books detached from their physical casings.

But the results are not completely immaterial. Abramović's work confronts us, often violently, with that which we cannot see and do not quite understand. We are taken away from the objects on the wall, and the books on the shelves, to deal with the ideas they want us to confront.

"Go to any classical art museum, and you will see the motifs of Abramović's work – the screaming woman of female hysteria, the nude body, pain, love, hate," says Colstrup.

"But there, they are trapped in the frame. What Abramović does is make those motifs alive again, embodied in the here and now, ready to experience anew." **M**

WHAT'S ON • JUNE

ALL MONTH

TAL R
The exhibition title 'Academy of Tal R' should be understood as a mildly humorous provocation, since Tal R's artwork always appears non-conformist, wild and simply unacademic.
Louisiana
Gl Strandvej 13, 3050
Louisiana.dk



CISTERNS X SAMBUICHI
Japanese architect Hiroshi Sambuichi has created an enchanting underground world beneath Frederiksberg Hill.
Cisternerne
Søndermarken, Frederiksberg
cisternerne.dk

ALL MONTH

TOVE JANNSON
Best known as the author of the Moomin books, this exhibition gives a varied insight into her body of work from her 1930s surrealist paintings to her lyrical works from the 1960's to 1970's.
Kunstforeningen GL STRAND
Gl. Strand 48, KBH
glstrand.dk
Opens on the 10th



AARSTIDERNE X FASANGÅRDEN
In a hidden corner of Frederiksborg Garden, Aarstiderne is opening a small organic shop in the old farmhouse Fasangården, originally built for the King's pheasant breeder.
Søndre Fasanvej 73, 2000
Frederiksberg
bit.ly/fasangarden
All Month



WHERE PHOTOS BELONG
A conference investigating the relationship between photography and society, and the way communities are represented and reshaped by artistic practices.
Det Kgl. Bibliotek
Søren Kierkegaards Plads 1,
copenhagenphotofestival.com
June 8

10

GREEN KBH 2017
This fair intends to inspire a greener future. Stop by to discuss ethical ideals, meet sustainable industry game-changers, and pick up a veggie burger and an ecological sweater while you do it.
Remisen
Blegdamsvej 132, KBH
Greenspeak.dk



ENDLESS SUMMER FESTIVAL
An international music festival of surf, psych pop and garage rock. The gathering embodies the idealism, colour and optimism of the 1960s California environment in Copenhagen.
Copenhagen CablePark
Kraftværksvej 24
endlesssummerfestival.com
June 10

11

JOEY MOE FREE CONCERT
An open-air concert, Joey Moe brings his pop-ballad hits to Bakken, the world's oldest amusement centre just north of Copenhagen.
Bakken
Dyrehavevej 62, 2930
bakken.dk

15

FILM, TAPAS AND COCKTAILS
In cooperation with the Restaurant SULT and Copenhagen Fashion Film, Cinemateket hosts an evening of tapas and movies. This evening they will be showing Tim Burton's surreal but sweet 'Big Fish'.
Cinemateket
Gøthersgade 55, KBH
dfi.dk/Filmhuset.aspx



KOMOS FESTIVAL
Pitched as 'food and folk in the garden', Komos Festival does exactly what it says on the tin: serving up 18 international folk artists and aiming to unite generations with good food and good music.
Kongens Have, Græsset
Gøthersgade, KBH
Komos.dk
June 16 -17

27

GUNS AND ROSES
If you can get your hands on a ticket, you are promised a wild evening with one of America's most famous rock'n'roll bands.
Telia Parken
Øster Allé 50, KBH
Teliaparken.dk

Emily Tait



ROSKILDE FESTIVAL
The largest North European culture and music festival and has existed since 1971. This year headliners include Foo Fighters, Solange and The XX.
Darupvej 19, 4000 Roskilde
roskilde-festival.dk
June 24 – July 1

WHAT'S ON • JULY



EID AT THE KONCERTHUSET

Eid is being celebrated at the DR Concert Hall with lots of music, food, and a sociable atmosphere. Award-winning Egyptian singer Fatma Zidan will be performing along with local singer Cisilia.

DR Koncerthuset

Ørestads Boulevard 13, KBH
drkoncerthuset.dk

July 1

12

PARAMORE

After four years of silence, the energetic rock group bring new songs to Lille Vega this July. Paramore made it big with hits like "Ignorance" and work on the Twilight soundtrack.

Lille VEGA

Enghavevej 40
Vega.dk



Copenhagen Jazz Festival

Every summer since 1979, Copenhagen Jazz Festival has taken over the streets, cafes, clubs and concert halls of Copenhagen.

Various Locations

Jazz.dk

July 7 - 16

16

NORAH JONES

Nine-time grammy winner Norah Jones comes to Copenhagen as part of the Jazz festival and brings with her music from her stunning sixth solo album.

Tivolis Koncertsal

Vesterbrogade 3, KBH
Ticketmaster.dk

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