

**HOW TO MAKE HELSINKI TOGETHER AN INCLUSIVE  
AND INTERNATIONAL ART & CULTURE CITY?**

**30.11.2017  
SEMINAR'S RESUME**

## HOW TO MAKE HELSINKI TOGETHER AN INCLUSIVE AND INTERNATIONAL ART & CULTURE CITY?



**Seminar 30.11.2017 at Viirus Theatre, Helsinki** Organizer Globe Art Point Helsinki (GAP) in collaboration with Helsinki City cultural services.

**39 participants:** Alejandro Olarte (electrical sound artist), Anna Möttölä (Rakkautta & Anarkiaa), Catia Suomalainen Pedrosa (Caisa), Ceyda Berk-Söderblom (MiklagardArt Exchange), Daniel Malpica (Sivuvalo), Dan Henriksson (Klockriken), David Kozma (European theatre collective/Globe Art Point Helsinki), Davide Giovanzana (Teatteri Metamorfoosi), Hanna Nyman (Baltic Circle), Emmi Lahtinen (Cupore), Hamy Ramizan, Jenni Sainio (Dance House), Jussi Lehtonen (Finnish National Theatre), Kaisa Kettunen (Annantalo), Kaisa Schmidt-Thome (Demos Helsinki), Keme Pellicer (Globe Art Point Helsinki), Kian Dowlatabadi, Maija Eränen (Zodiak), Marianne Niemelä (Museum of Impossible Forms), Marja Sakari (Kiasma), Marjo Pyykönen, Mikael Aaltonen (Kiasma/URB), Minna Tawast (Teatteri&Tanssi&Sirkus-lehti), Oge Eneh (Caisa), Faruk Lika (Caisa), Outi Järvinen (Arts Management Helsinki), Outi Korhonen (Culture for All), Pajju Tyrväinen (Helsinki City cultural services), Paula Tuovinen (Arts University), Petra Hannus (Stoa/Vuotalo), Rita Paqvalen (Culture for All), Tarja Haili (Uudenmaan liitto), Tatiana Solovieva, Tomi Purovaara (Globe Art Point Helsinki), Topi Lehtipuu (Helsinki Festival), Tuula Haavisto (Helsinki City cultural services), Reetta Kauranen, Heini Oikarinen (Helsinki City), Maija Tanninen (HAM).



## **DISCUSSION: Summary**

*(by Tomi Purovaara)*

### **OPENING WORDS**

#### **Tomi Purovaara (managing director, Globe Art Point Helsinki):**

Population´s diversity in Helsinki and in the capital city area increases rapidly. There lives approximately 200 000 people with mother tongue other than Finnish or Swedish at the area. It is estimated that by 2030 this amount will be 350 000, meaning that in Helsinki every fourth inhabitant will speak other than Finland´s official languages as mother tongue. This effects also to the art and culture sector. It is important to create models where culturally diverse citizens have access to cultural services both as makers and as consumers.

There has not been a permanent platform and connecting force to enable communication and collaboration between local and non-Finnish-born art & culture workers. Founded by the communities of the non-Finnish-born artist in 2016, Globe Art Point Helsinki works to develop accessibility and collaboration within the field by collecting and distributing information, supporting networking and with cultural political advocacy work.

#### **Tuula Haavisto (cultural director, Helsinki City cultural services):**

The new Helsinki City strategy emphasizes the meaning of internationalism, inclusion and transparency. These values are in the strategy to be really implemented because Helsinki sees their importance as creators of positive dynamics.

The most flourishing cities in the world history ([Maailmanhistorian kukoistavimmat kaupungit](#))

a book by Ari Turunen offers a list of strengths of successful cities in different times. One key element is ability to offer possibilities for surprising encounters and combinations which create innovations and vitality. In our times openness for new ideas and dialogue are lifeblood for any city´s success. Also Helsinki reaches for this. As an example of this policy Helsinki has increased its collaboration with the International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN) which enables systematic support for the artists in risk coming to Helsinki from various countries. Also, city´s new grant criteria system functions as a good tool for the application assessment committees to be able to better take into account art institutes´ actions towards better inclusiveness and diversity.



**Kaisa Schmidt-Thome (city researcher, facilitator, Demos Helsinki):**

The use of the term integration may be problematic because it contains an idea of only one common reality in Helsinki and in Finland where those moving here are supposed to be integrated. There is an example in a German city Oberhausen which has turned city's poor financial situation to favor by allowing its inhabitant ´s self-motivated actions on a widest level.



## ARTISTS' SPEECHES



**Davide Giovanzana (theater director – artistic director of Teatteri Metamorfoosi, Helsinki):** Born in the Italian-speaking area of Switzerland, Davide is used to live among two different cultures. Nevertheless, this fact has not been an obstacle for him while working in several countries (Switzerland, Latvia, Germany, England, Russia) but it became an issue when he moved to Finland. Here artists' nationality means a label in spite of the duration he/she has lived, studied or worked in Finland. Before he moved to Finland Davide worked mostly as an actor but he made his master's and doctoral studies of theatre directing here in the Theatre Academy. Nowadays he works with his post doc research in the Theatre Academy as well as teaching in e.g. Latvia and England. In Riga's Art Academy he was recently nominated as a honorable professor. Davide gives an example from the Helsinki-based Stage festival: He led a working group with one artist living in Germany, and other artists, both Finnish and non-Finnish-born, all lived in Finland. In a Helsingin Sanomat review the theatre play produced by this working group was called "foreign", and the author wondered why these kinds of performances has to be imported to Finland when the local artists could do same kind of pieces. The director of a major theatre festival in Moscow saw this work and invited it to his theatre, as a Finnish piece. On the other hand, the Finnish Theatre Information Center (TINFO) told that the

performance was not Finnish since there were artists who were not Finnish citizens.

From his own perspective, Davide makes Finnish art and culture and he wonders why it is so difficult for Finnish people to accept and appreciate it. In the panel organized by Globe Art Point in October 2017 theatre director Erik Söderblom pointed that a foreign theatre maker can make Finnish theater only when the Finnish society has changed. However, even though the society has already changed and is in an ongoing process to become more and more diverse, the Finnish theatre remains still very closed artform. Language issue is often given as a reason, because the makers should speak Finnish. For Davide this has not been a problem while working in other countries. And at the same time, the lingual diversity among the new theatre audiences is increasing, and also these communities should have access to art and culture.

Why then is the Finnish art and culture sector so closed?

This question is interesting also when comparing art and culture field to business sector which had the SLUSH 2017 event at the same time as GAP's seminar. In SLUSH the main issue is to promote encounters and synergy of people and ideas as widely as possible. Cultural diversity is not a special issue there, so what makes the Finnish art and culture sector so different?

Cultural diversity is not in focus in Davide's own artistic work. More important for him are issues like people's relationship to the new technology and economy. He has for example combined circus arts and quantum physics in his performance Quantum Circus, and with Syksy Räsänen he produced a performance dealing with cosmology.





### **Alejandro Olarte (electronic music artist):**

Born in Colombia where he started his studies, Alejandro sees the combination of art and pedagogy as the most important. After working as a teacher in Bogota's music institutions he moved to Paris for further studies at the Conservatoire. The extreme competition and hierarchy of the music sector lead him to apply for exchange studies in Barcelona. One visit to Finland opened his eyes (and ears) to the positive sides of the country and he decided to move in. At the moment he works on his artistic doctoral studies at the department of music technology in Sibelius Academy.

highly appreciates possibilities to sense the ultimate silence in Finnish nature. He also respects Finn's attitude to work hard – it is also his way of working. As an art pedagogue Alejandro sees the importance of giving time and space for children's art education. An art experience is like a seed that has to be nurtured, and that has to be given long-term support. As an artist Alejandro emphasizes the similarities between people. It is more important to see the issues that connect people than those which separate us.

To Alejandro's experience, a foreign artist living in Finland has to prove that she/he is a 200 percent good professional to be accepted to the local art field. Work which is hundred percent good seems not to be enough.

### **Ceyda Berk-Söderblom (director, MiklagardArt Exchange):**

Currently based and worked in Finland, Ceyda is a senior cultural manager, with an international experience of 16 years, mostly in the festivals with close ties to the world-known institutions, orchestras, artists, and ensembles. Before moving to Finland at the end of 2015, she worked for 14 years in one of the most established art institution of Izmir, Turkey. It was a non-profit, non-governmental foundation organizing two international festivals, a national composition contest – and it was a home to a music academy and a museum. Ceyda worked as the festival coordinator and main programmer of a classical music festival leading a team of 60 people, and as the programmer of a jazz festival. Apart from that she curated many international projects and artistic programs celebrating diplomatic relations between Turkey, Netherlands and Poland. She is very proud to say that with her colleagues, she founded the first and only traditional music instruments museum of Turkey.

Ceyda states that 14 % of Helsinki population is consisted of non-Finnish, Swedish and Sami speaking people. This number is expected to grow to 23 % by 2030. That is what every single institution in Finland should address if we want to achieve cultural democracy.

Ceyda sees art as a language of universal citizenship. Cultural workers and artists should be defined with their work not with their ethnic background. Ceyda refuses to accept any classification that leads people to segregation. She is not part of any integration plan or structure prepared for newcomers.

Arts and culture are the only ways to generate divergent thinking, and they are tools to enable cognitive ability to imagine, and cultivate creativity and innovation. To address to global issues of today, we need creative and innovative thinkers in every sector. Out-of-the box thinking is possible when we work with not only like-minded people. Teams that are built with people from different countries, cultures and disciplines bring other dimensions.

The biggest challenges Ceyda has observed are the typical mindsets of people working in art and culture institutions, resistance to change and lack of practice to change the given opportunities with people from foreign backgrounds to practice their professions with Finnish counterparts. The questions should be asked: How to change the mindset of the gatekeepers in arts and cultural institutions? How to transform the cultural field and encourage the institutions to challenge themselves? What about the tangible barriers: financial structure? How to break invisible walls of organizations, rules and policies – the discriminating structure?





Ceyda stresses that the new solutions are possible only if the Finnish institutions change the defensive attitude and instead focus on what else we could do. We need to take a picture of today and concentrate on future. We all need to accept that hybrid teams are stronger and diversity is an opportunity for better, effective outcome. The most important step is to create dialogue. Let's recognize that there are skill gaps on both sides.

As concrete proposals Ceyda gives following initiatives.

It is time to unlock the territorial borders between institutions and international people by establishing:

- Domestic Fellowship: Temporary residency for international artist, curator, producers living in Helsinki
- Cross-cultural mutual mentorship: give-and-take at the Finnish arts institutions
- Dedicated budgets: Implementing ideas curated by in-house teams and invited international artists and cultural workers of Finland
- In-House-Creative Workshops: project-based engagements, collaborations between institutions and artists, curators, producers and cultural workers
- Transforming the rules: Enabling every single person working in the cultural field to experience the added value of international teams

- Design Thinking: Collaborating with transition design/service design experts to overcome in-house resistance to cross-national teams
- Adding it to the Curriculum: Making the University of the Arts a platform of cross-national creativity for democratic and sustainable cultural field.



## Participants' Comments:

### **Kaisa Kettunen (Annantalo):**

The experiences and long-term work of artists with different backgrounds could be introduced in residence programs for example in Annantalo. This could make surprising encounters and new collaboration possible.

### **Outi Korhonen (Kulttuurikaikille):**

Important issues in art education are trust, interest and love which together make it possible to learn new. In art everyone has his/hers own voice, that a good teacher listens and respects. To offer trust and space are teacher's tasks. A good term for this relation is "pedagogical love". Is the program of Helsinki City where art works are ordered accessible enough for the non-Finnish-born artists? And are the recruitment processes of the art institutes up-to-date? A careful analysis in these is needed.

### **Dan Henriksson (Klockriken Theatre):**

Text oriented focus in the Finnish theatre has a long tradition. And Swedish speaking Finnish theatre has an important role as defender of the minority language. Klockriken works internationally using English often as the working language. In performances any language can be used.

## PANEL DISCUSSION

### Panelists:

Jussi Lehtonen  
(Finnish National  
Theatre), Topi  
Lehtipuu (Helsinki  
Festival), Jenni Sainio  
(Dance House) Catia  
Suomalainen  
Pedrosa  
(International Culture  
Center Caisa), Marja  
Sakari (Kiasma),  
Paula Tuovinen  
(University of Arts)



### Marja Sakari:

Kiasma has a strategy to enhance its openness and participation. As part of it museum has a free entrance for all under 18 years and for all asylum seekers. On Fridays entrance is free for everybody. Kiasma has organized projects for different special groups e.g. for Somali women. Museum is also participating in a project by Terike Haapoja where art organizations are challenged to make strategies to enhance their accessibility and social justice.

It is important to raise issues dealing with inequality and to find improving solutions in dialogue with those groups. There are still processes that need to be developed in Kiasma where the only non-Finnish-born workers are mainly cleaners. In principal the recruiting policy of the Finnish National Gallery is nowadays open whereas before all employees had to have ability in both Finnish and Swedish. Nevertheless, it is very seldom that museums have open vacancies and competition is hard. Kiasma is part of the Möbius project which invites foreign curators to Finland. Improving diversity takes time and development has to be natural.

### Jenni Sainio:

Dance House will be opened in 2020 so now it is time to create structures also from the point of view of diversity. The House is meant not only for contemporary dance but for all dance genres. Therefore it is important to define the genres and e.g. how the professionalism is defined in them. Since there will no permanent ensemble in the House it is important to

find as many different partners and dance cultures as possible. Dance House wants to find also the young makers. For example, in summer 2018 there will be 5-10 young summer employees working in the office bringing new ideas and networks. There are good examples abroad (e.g. Oslo Dance House) how the young amateurs can bring new audiences and makers.

### **Topi Lehtipuu:**

The phenomenon of immigration is familiar to Topi himself since he returned to Helsinki only 2 years ago after living in Paris for 15 years. There is content from all art forms in the program of Helsinki festival. The non-verbal genres are the “easiest”. In theatre many program proposals tend to be “too Finnish”, since the Festival tries to program performances with potential also in international markets. In 2018 festival will have its 50th years anniversary with some new openings e.g. a showcase inside the festival. Helsinki Festival has a slogan “art is for everyone”. That is why it tries to lower all thresholds for better participation. In 2018 this policy is implemented for example with ticket price reductions (all events will have 50 tickets with 10 euros entrance fee).

An exchange project where non-Finnish-born artists and experts would work in Finnish art organizations is a positive initiative, but the processes, funding and responsibilities should be carefully considered. Each art institution has to analyze these issues from their own perspective. Everyone has to do their own part.

### **Jussi Lehtonen:**

The goal for the Finnish National Theatre´s Touring theatre is to bring theatre to places where its is seldom seen like in prisons, in establishments for elderly etc and thus to reach makers and audiences from marginalized groups. Jussi´s latest work as director is a documentary play *Toinen koti – Other home*. It is based on the stories of 15 interviewed asylum seekers. There were also workshops open for all asylum seekers as part of the project. 4 professionals, 12 non-professionals and actor Terhi Panula and musician Sanna Salmenkallio were selected to the performing group. The performance used both Finnish and Arabic languages. Here, for the first time, Arabic was used in a performance of the Finnish National Theatre.

As a remark to the discussion whether the Finnish theatre is too “closed” Jussi mentions the circumstances where the National Theatre was established 145 years ago when all theatre plays in Finland were only in Swedish and Russian. This still gives one of the tasks for the National



Theatre: to support and to renew theatre art in Finnish. At the same time theatre is willing to reflect the changing society, makers and audiences. The change starts always from the youth. Therefore, it would be important that some of the major theatre houses in Helsinki would establish a high-quality group for young people of different backgrounds. With a good professional direction those youngsters could develop to be highly attractive, culturally and lingually diverse theatre makers. On their path they could find their ways to semi-professional groups and then as adults to the Theatre Academy. There they could start to change the education from inside. As a result of this process also the theatre makers in institutions and groups would be more and more diverse with different languages and accents: the Finnish theatre field would grow to be more diverse as a natural process.

Some of the theatres should take this challenge as a great possibility!

### **Paula Tuovinen:**

In general, situation for freelance artists in Finland is very difficult because there are a very limited amount of available vacancies. To gain recognition and visibility is very hard for all. The process to be approved as a student in Arts University is based on regulations. International contacts and networks of the Arts University are many, and the proportion of foreign students is growing. In Arts Academy approximately 25% of the students have a foreign background. This is the natural way to increase diversity in the Finnish art and culture sector. A required ultimate change needs to be started from the structures and funding with a major guidance by the state.

As an idea, Globe Art Point could establish an own agency to introduce non-Finnish-born artists to the art field.

### **Catia Suomalainen Pedrosa:**

International Cultural Center Caisa has implemented diverse cultural work already for decades. Caisa´s staff is also culturally most diverse. Majority of Caisa´s program is produced by artists with different cultural backgrounds, and there are more and more projects combining both Finnish and non-Finnish-born artists. This kind of inclusiveness is the key element for every art and culture organization. And this kind of approach would be possible with the already existing resources. The will for new thinking is the most gracious resource required here.



## Comments from the public:

### **Daniel Malpica (multilingual literature project Sivuvälo):**

Art organizations do have resources already to be able to develop their profile to more diverse direction. Sivuvälo has implemented projects with high artistic level with rather small resources in partnership with cultural centers, poet's communities and Nuoren Voiman Liitto.

### **Rita Paqvalen (Culture for All service):**

Culture for All will lead the AVAUS project for the next 1,5 years in partnership with Cupore and Globe Art Point. As part of it Culture for All will send a diversity trainer to the 4 selected art institutes to make observation of the processes to have a picture how the respective institutes take account diversity and accessibility. The trainer will then plan educational packages to improve current situations and processes together with the institute. As part of AVAUS Cupore will make a survey of diversity in Finnish art institutes. Artists of Globe Art Point will work as experience experts inside the educational packages. In addition, GAP will organize the closing seminar of AVAUS in Spring 2019.

### **Kian Dowlatabadi (visual artist):**

The Finnish conception of arts does not take into account the differences between the Western and the Oriental art traditions. Still, the starting points are totally different. Also, the tradition of art education can differ much between cultures. Therefore, it can be violent to force artists with oriental background to be part of the Finnish art education system and thus to insult different art traditions, maintainers and developers. It would be necessary to find ways and platforms where artists with different backgrounds could work together respecting each other's views and learning new.

### **Paiju Tyrväinen (Helsinki City cultural services):**

Art institutes should challenge themselves to increasing openness. In business sector it has been comprehended that culturally and lingually diverse team can produce more innovations and new perspectives. Although, seeking new ideas and artistic perspectives is the core element of every art institution and group, there still exists a tendency where they remain as closed communities with hardly any access for the non-native Finnish artists.



**Emmi Lahtinen (Cupore):**

In Finland there is a long tradition implementing projects to develop circumstances of different minorities only with special funding. As long as these actions are made with separate funds these new processes will not be mainstreamed. In addition, the targets groups of these actions can experience themselves less “valuable” because they require special treatment.

**FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, PROPOSALS****David Kozma (theatre director, Globe Art Point´s chairman):**

It is time to confess that also those artists who have moved to Finland from other cultures create Finnish culture. In arts and culture as with the teams in sports there can be players with different nationalities in a same team, with the same goal: to win together.

**Kaisa Schmidt-Thome (facilitator, Demos Helsinki):**

Naming and labeling can create all kinds of power structures. For an example, according to the recent survey made by Globe Art Point, none of the replied artists does not want to be called for example an “immigrant artist”. The proper word would be an artist without any prefix.

Education and its institutions, as well as the contacts and networks created during studies, have great importance for those working in the Finnish art sector. So far, the expertise of non-Finnish-born artist resident in Finland has not been made use of so much. The recruiting processes do not recognize their potential and the qualification requirements often leave the non-Finnish applicants outside. Nevertheless, they could have a great positive impact for example in proposing new artistic and production innovations, bringing their international networks as well as building bridges between cultural and lingual minorities and Finnish art and culture institutions and projects. Thus, it is important that the artists and audiences with different background have access to the Finnish art & culture sector as equally active players, not as target of actions.



## WHAT'S NEXT?

### Globe Art Point Helsinki:

During 2018 Globe Art Point will continue dialogue and collaboration started in 2017 to create new concrete processes and networks supporting and enhancing diversity, participation and openness in different art forms and in the Finnish art and culture sector in general.



*Pictures: David Kozma*

