



Alternative festivals & new formats

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Ticket to Future Festivals
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Historical background for festivals

- ▶ Article by Dragan Klaic published in ITI Germany yearbook 2014
- ▶ *First big festival in modern time: Salzburger Festspiele by Max Reinhardt after 1. WW*
- ▶ *Only after 2 WW did the festival movement really take of with Edinburgh, Avignon and The Holland Festival taking the leading role they still have. (Aarhus Festival in 1965)*
- ▶ *"Festivals became celebrations of humanity, its talent and collaborative will, an investment in virtues of citizenship in post-war democracies, an inspiring and encouraging force that reasserted a promise of future peace, stability and prosperity in Europe."*





World theater presentations

From the 50' - focussed on world theatre – Festival d'automne á Paris, World Theatre Season in London, Berliner Festspiele/Teatertreffen, Theater der Welt.

Leading role to national states with governmental support – part of the welfare states way of engaging citizens – and a vehicle for state representational.

As a result aesthetic considerations and programming coherence suffered.

Art was as a vehicle for political propaganda.



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The alternative festivals

- ▶ anti-authoritarian, alternative festival formats in the late 60' with young not established artists.
- ▶ Experimentation and a critical voice in front. The festival of Fools format.
- ▶ Breakout of traditional cultural zones to abandoned sites as former factories - the sitespecific.
- ▶ The curious public brought the adventures in the marginalized communities – a cultural revolution.
- ▶ And not much deliberate programming...





Festivals as a part of public planing

- ▶ Steady renewal of the festival scene: new concepts and formats, more curating and increasing engagement from local and regional government in funding the festivals – and being organizers.
- ▶ Democratic, enlightenen and open-minded cultural programs.
- ▶ Festivals integrated part of a official strategy to "put a city on the map" as a turist strategy, of entertaining their citizens, as part of cityplanning - created by official culture workers.





Festivals until today

- 1) Strong local foundation reaches towards global understanding
- 2) The artists taking over and creating their own platforms and collaboration – a decentralisation based in the artistic idea.
- 3) The dialogue and symposium – what do we want with each other? An exchange of ideas, diversity and integrated communication
- Waves in Vordingborg in exampel of all





What is a festivals in the context of society

Festivals keep developing in closeness to changes in society.

Festivals is closely connected to of the agenda of society - because it is a public manifestation.

Seen today as a specific respons to globalization.

Festivals today should be able to reflect on how exactly they are positioned. And how to create a meaningful relationship with the public estranged in a challenging global agenda.



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Facing digitalization & social media

- What does digitalisation mean for how we think festivals?
- Nothing is new anymore – never be first with the latest
- We cannot beat it – but we can join it – and not only as a communication tool. Take the frontseat of inventing the way we interact with our public through new social media.
- The more people are digital, the more they long for the physical togetherness that we can offer as festivals.



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What does it mean that we co-create?

- ▶ We can no longer just do a top-down curating – it does not make sense anymore. We need to work together with our public and ask for their ideas – take them seriously and give them the power in a facilitating way.
- ▶ We need to be flexible in our programming – this is why the deeply rooted local festivals are leading at the moment.



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Can we decentralize? Can we invent new open formats?

Festivals which:

- Advocate for transparency in all they do
- Collaborate in a very broad sense
- Co-create with artists and community
- Create empowerment



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Can we talk about quality?

And clarity of our vision. Balance between content and format.

Quality is about being very conscious about what we are doing:

What are our content?

What makes us unique?

What do we do better than anybody else?

What is unique in our surroundings – what can we build on?

What is the situation in the society we operate in?

Copying another festival is doomed.



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Copenhagen International Theatre/KIT, Denmark

Shifting formats over the years as a strategy of renewal

- Festivals of Fools in the 80 (the alternative, rebellious)
- Dancing city and Images of Africa in the 90 (world theatre and new formats) – also citypresentations and European Theatre symposiums under CPH Cultural Capital (closely link to official cultural strategies)
- New circus in 00 (following the new – more commercialized)
- Metropolis in 10 – outreach into cityspaces and now letting go of the festival format going into more season based longterm work with artists and audiences. Decentralization.
- <http://www.metropolis.dk/>



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Full Moon Dance Festival, Finland

- First time in 1992.
- to provide performance opportunities for young choreographers
- Hosted by the town of Pyhäjärvi – 7500 people
- The “Pyhäsalmi Miracle”.
- <http://www.fullmoondance.fi/en>





Lismore Immrama, Ireland

- Immrama = traveling in Irish
- a weekend in June since 2003.
- dedicated to the art of Travel Writing
- <https://lismore-immrama.com>





Sideways 2012, Belgium

- 33 projects in open space
- in 5 places throughout Belgium
- over 30 partners
- a journey of 334 kilometers
- 16 walking days
- 5 festival weekends
- 2 symposia
- 1 multimedia donkey!
- <http://www.sideways2012.be/>



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My ideal festival...

My festival presents new works by exciting young artists, combining interesting international names with a local flavour. Its borders go beyond Europe and make room for artists from South-America, Africa and Asia.

My festival is held in a small town, where its impact is real and important. It is a source of pride for the town and the officials and politicians boast of it all year long and support it wholeheartedly.

My festival takes place in odd places – discovering new, unusual outdoor facilities, using well-known places in new ways, turning theatre spaces upside down.

My festival is in constant dialogue with its audiences. In fact, they are not audiences, but close relatives, invited to a great party they helped organise themselves. They are involved all year and cannot wait for the event to start...

My festival is colourful... It is intelligent, raises awareness, makes people think, and inspires new ideas. It advocates sustainability both in terms of green thinking, but also with regard to understanding the growth and development of artists.

My festival is built and organised as a truly open structure, where ideas can flourish. There is no festival director dictating the programme, but instead a facilitator supporting the process of creating the festival...

My festival is really not a festival but an encounter, a meeting place that shows why the performing arts are such an important part of society...

Susanne Danig Director of the Danish centre of the International Theatre Institute, producer of the festivals Asteroid and Waves



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