

KedjaUmeå 2010, what we will do now and a wish

Sadly, I will very likely not be able to come to Kedja Reykavik as I will be too busy elsewhere. But I have a wish to still being able to continue what started at Kedja Umeå. Therefore I wrote this text and I hope that these ideas will stay with us.

What is Kedja? is a question posed to me several times. It is a meeting platform, and as such its format was new to me. The different seminars of Kedja was in equal measures taken by different professional actors in the dance field; programmers, choreographers, producers and managers. Other actors in the context of dance, such as "only-dancers", a general audience, critics, theorists and grant-givers were quite absent in general at Kedja. This said, looking at Kedja in retrospective, the deliberate more or less equal mixing of professional categories in the same workshops makes complete sense today. Because producers and creators of dance need to approach each other for two reasons, 1: to facilitate an articulation of one's own needs and plans to one's inter-dependent partners *inside* the context, and 2: to be able to strengthen the field in itself, to articulate its needs more efficiently in relation to the rest of society, please note that I use *needs*, not need as there is a multitude of needs, plans and wishes among the different agents in dance today. By rest of society I mean primarily in relation to politicians, the general public and the press.

Independence

I here openly steal one of Dragan Klaić's points that he made in his closing lecture yesterday: Artists are not independent, they are inter-dependent, we will acknowledge and accept this. We might strive for autonomy, which is different from independence but autonomy is not a fixed nor an absolute state, it is something to always be questioned, worked on and re-negotiated. Dance is not a context where independent artists work outside of market structures, we are in a high degree dealing with a market situation, and the logic that this implies. Sure, we are dealing with market structures that does everything it can to commodify our products which might be problematic, but there are ways of outsmarting these mechanisms, **IF WE WANT TO**. Regarding this I see very diverse attitudes that leads to friction among different agents of different professions, some work to fit into or encourage this market-logic, some doesn't and some has taken a "double-stance", they do it when needed and when it facilitates the work, and they don't do it when it is more of a hindrance than an enabler.

Reflecting on how I work and its implications

Personally the latter "double-stance" option above gets my vote, I do believe that as the artist I am now with my needs it is necessary to exist in a network of networks with many different ways of finding support for my work, be it support in the form of money, dancers, programmers, producers or dramaturges. Some of my works are big productions, this implies to have heavy financial support and this in turn implies that I have a strong brand, which in turn implies that I encourage the fixation of a value to my products, commodification and a market-logic. On the other hand (hence the double in "double-stance") I do also work in very small productions with practically no money, this I do to be able to do other kind of works that won't fit for whatever reason into the market logic within which primarily bigger institutions are working.

My wish

We will step out of the closet, the closet that sustains the image of culture being outside of everything else. We as individuals and as a collective will start to take responsibility for the image of culture today, cultural structures, politics, policies and how we implicitly sustain and support these by accepting the current situation. I too often hear: they (politicians, programmers, grant-givers, journalists a.o.) don't understand us, they don't work for us, they are elitistic, they are conservative, they don't prioritize dance etc. This reveals an attitude that easily situates oneself outside of the policy-making and structuring of dance, in fact as if you are not part of it, you only do your work and wait for others to decide the politics of culture and dance.

What I missed at Kedja

A big-as-phat-kicking-your-ass party, because this makes people closer and you inevitably meet and get to know people.

Some of the things I have written might seem like quite vague and grand words and visions but I wish to emphasize that I hope that these ideas will not just remain abstract political words as is too often the case but that they will be implemented into the actions of myself and others. That is why I have written this text which is deliberately a hodge-podge of concerns that came up during Kedja.

These issues originates in some of my own concerns from before and some of them originates in the seminars I took part in, The fabulous seminars/meetings are: Choreographers Meeting organized by Marika Hedemyr (a.o), Arts Management Ivl.1 by Lene Bang and Gunn Hernes, Artistic and Organizational interaction by Anders Jacobsson and Johan Thelander and lastly the final lecture by Dragan Klaić.

I am more than happy to hear comments on this, please send them to:

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RE: Kedja reflections