

Nordic-Baltic dance professionals in close contact with local citizens

Networking, competence building and geographical outreach are on the keōja project's agenda. The coming year more dance groups will go to the wilderness, the knowledge of dance writers and mentees will be strengthened, the keōja Think Tanks will present their proposals and finally all interested stakeholders will gather on the Åland Islands.

Halfway through the keōja 2012-2015 cycle, 96 dance activities involving more than 6500 artists, other dance professionals as well as audiences/citizens in 8 countries, have taken place. Behind the initiatives are 11 organisations from the Nordic-Baltic contemporary dance field that together form the keōja project which is supported by EUs Culture Programme as well as Nordic and national funding bodies. The present cycle was initiated in summer 2012.

Follow the artists!

One of the more extensive keōja activities is the Wilderness residences that bring 10 selected dance groups to 10 different smaller communities in the Nordic-Baltic region. Each group goes to two places for three weeks where they work in close contact with the local community and nature. Currently the Norwegian group Translation in Progress is residing at West Jutlands Folk Highschool in Ringkøbing in Western Jutland, close to the North Sea. The model has proven to be fruitful for the urban based artists that have been challenged by the way life unfolds itself outside of the capital areas as well as for the hosting communities that in some cases for the first time have experienced contemporary dance. The outcome will be a series of dance performances that will be presented on the Åland Islands at the keōja Encounter August 2014 and be offered for international touring. The activities of the Wilderness groups can be followed on www.kedjawilderness.tumblr.com

Talking, Thinking, Writing – Meeting!

The dance professionals have been invited to attend open seminars – the so called [keōja Encounters](#) which highlight networking and exchange. Also they have been encouraged to apply to take part in both the keōja Wilderness residencies and the [keōja Mentoring Scheme](#). Agenda setting people from the field have been invited to participate in the two [keōja Think Tanks](#) and finally a series of open activities related to writing and talking about dance have taken place in 7 countries with more to come. The outcome is a series of articles on dance which are in the writing. The authors have been chosen from an open call for ideas.

It is possible to follow the Writing Movement activities on www.writingmovement.com

Local citizens experience dance from neighbouring countries – face to face

Uniquely for the Nordic and Baltic countries, the project embraces these different yet intertwined activities. However there is no theatrical dance without audience and more than 5000 people have had the chance to experience contemporary Nordic and Baltic dance performed indoor as well as outdoor in venues, docks, shopping malls, museums etc. This corresponds with an overall belief in the strength of the personal, live meeting, which is pivotal for the whole project. Be it the one-to-one mentor-mentee situation, the closed group of a Think Tank or the meeting between artists and local communities at the three-week-long Wilderness stays. Meeting IRL is a stimulating alternative to the much used on-line meeting forms that prevail in collaborations across borders.

Ten Encounters in 6 years

keōja started already in 2008 and since then 2000 people have been directly involved in the keōja activities which in the years 2008-2011 primarily consisted of the keōja Encounters. The 2012-2015 cycle is half way through, the project continues until 2015 with lots of Wilderness residencies, Think Tank meetings, writing workshops and mentoring sessions. The next keōja Encounter which will be the tenth, is taking place in Mariehamn on the self-governing Åland Islands in August 2014.

About keōja 2012-2015:

- **keōja** means chain in Icelandic.
- **Dansehallerne** in Copenhagen has been head of keōja since 2007.
- **The keōja Wilderness partners are:** Independent Theatres Association (main Wilderness organizer in collaboration with Performing Arts Iceland), Reykjavik; Bora Bora, Aarhus; Danseareana nord, Hammerfest; MAD Production, Helsinki; New Theatre Institute of Latvia, Riga.
- **In charge of Writing Movement:** Dance Information Norway, Oslo
- **In charge of the Think Tanks and the keōja Encounter in Mariehamn:** Dance Info Finland, Helsinki
- **In charge of the keōja Mentoring Scheme:** SITE, Stockholm and associated partner Kultur i Väst, Göteborg.
- **In charge of the 2012 and 2014 Encounters:** Union of Estonian Dance Artists, Estonia; Fish Eye, Klaipeda

Please visit:

<http://kedjawilderness.tumblr.com/>

www.keoja.net

www.facebook.com/Kedja2012

For more information about the keōja activities, please contact:

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