



BIRCA

BÆKKELUND INTERNATIONAL RESIDENCY CENTER FOR ARTISTS

ISLAND CONNECT 2022



The first Island Connect was with the Danish group Patchworks of Cecilie Schyth Kjær and Marcus Alexander Roydes as well as Mallorcan artists Pau Pascual and Marga Salas - on the terrace of BIRCA

Island Connect is a joint project between 5 European residency centers for dramatic art situated on islands. Bornholm/Denmark, Mallorca/Spain, Cres/Croatia, Naxos/Greece, and Limerick/Ireland. The Island Connect project in Denmark is supported by a grant from Creative Europe and also supported by the Danish Art Foundation and Bornholm Municipality. It is an essential part of BIRCA to be part of this network and it constitutes a good part of our work for creating residency opportunities for new performing artists. The networks allows us to connect to and support artists from areas of Europe we might not otherwise know, and it has given us a good insight into the performance arts sector of these regions. It also opens our professional ideas to new ways of working and important themes to address on insularity.

The first Island Connect took place from the 2nd - 14th May with artists from Denmark and Mallorca and there was a small presentation on the 13th May.



Patchworks – Cecilie Schyth Kjær and Marcus Alexander Roydes/Denmark

During their stay at BIRCA the Danish artists explored material for their upcoming performance with the working title “Ode to Y2K” - a piece that looks lovingly and critically back to the turn of the millennium with it's glittery, alluring, ugly, insanely fascinating and at times profound problematic culture.

At Birca we began to map out our project. We put all our ideas, thoughts and questions down on paper, which made a big difference for us. Suddenly we had an overview of the different things we wanted to explore during the residency. We ended up discovering a format that we wanted to continue researching, in which we play with live streaming from an old VHS camera and projections from previously recorded material.

Cecilie and Marcus also had a two week residency at Mallorca following directly their time at BIRCA.

Islander Focus from Mallorca with Pau Pascual, Marga Salas and Sebastia Boven i Nicolau



They were researching on the connection between performing arts and the architecture of houses on the islands of Bornhol and Mallorca and their transference into the islanders' behavior through visiting different places on the island and interviewing among others a priest. The project's name was “Arc Endins” (from the Arch Inwards), deriving from exploring the collective subconscious and social attitude and behaviour created by layers of generations which have passed on their triggers and their fears, their phobia to the outside, to what lies beyond the sea. It's also a reunion space with our memory, the one we know we have (or at least we sense it) but that is hidden, and often we are unwilling to show or acknowledge.

As a part of the residency visits was organized to the handcraft center Grønbechsgaard, the beach in Hasle, Østerlars roundchurch, Gudhjem with Kisser as guide to sacred places, the circus building in Sandvig with Peter Vadim - and everyone went sailing on Thor from Gudhjem to the Sacred cliffs.



The second Island Connect residency at BIRCA took place 11th- 25th September with artists from Denmark, Croatia and Ireland. We solve the situation from the Irish group that was hit by covid and offered to take them extra in together with the other artists, which meant sharing the rehearsal spaces a bit more. There were performances 21st September under the auspices of Bornholm Culture Week with the participation of an audience of 46.



The second Island Connect-residency at BIRCA was impacted greatly by visiting the sea to find seaweed and by the large gathering of artists in the end for the cultural week event

Irma Unusic, Anna Javoran & Sabrina Fraternali/Croatia



The 3 Croatian dancers had been worked with young people in search of the good spirit of the place to restore harmony and a better energy in connection to the surroundings. The project is called "The Secret Garden". On Bornholm they visited the local drama school in Rønne to work with the young people in a workshop on what made them feel safe in a place. 21/9 they presented ideas from this work. Later they did a internal showing for the group of Island Connect artists with movements and structural ideas.

It was a very deep experience we had in BIRCA and we will remember it very well. The surroundings, way of life, working and feedback contributed to making a special connection with the other residency groups from Ireland (Where Seaweed Dances) and Denmark (The Laughing Crowd), and they will remain truly warm memories.

Danae Wollen & Samuel Arnold Keane/Ireland



Danae and Samuel has been investigated coastal areas - movements and sounds of people, animals and seaweed that live where land meets sea – and collected a lot of seaweed. The performance they worked on is called “Where Seaweed Dances” and is a mixture of live music, acrobatic movement and theater. The seaweed was integrated in the set and costumes – and we got to eat it too.

During this residency we really focused on producing a sketch of the show which we were able to perform for a live audience...With the other artists in residency, a wonderfully warm community formed. Potential for collaboration even just in sharing thoughts was incredibly important in this time. A feeling of togetherness in the creative process made the experience all the more beautiful.

Antionette Helbing with Birgitte Skands/Denmark

Antoinette has worked choreographically to investigate laughter and created the performance “The Laughter game” that was presented 21/9. Antoinette and Birgitte has during the residency worked further on the theme of laughter but from a more collective approach towards the new groupwork for 8 dancers “The Laughing Crowd”. The performance presents laughter as an act of collectivism and as a behavior that stimulates mutual understanding, human connection and empathy. But also as sparkling and at times explosive loss of control. They did a presentation of the work they had done at the residency on this development both 21/9 and later internally for the IC artists.

The residency period at BIRCA was the first research phase, where the topic laughter was examined from all perspectives and we underwent our laughter practice on a daily base. The greatest benefit of the insularity was the undisturbed working peace. Being in calm and beautiful nature and having the days to completely emerge into the work was amazing and created the best start into the project.

PRESENTATION OF PERFORMANCES ON 21ST OF SEPTEMBER

We presented the 3 residency works but also invited the following three performances created under Island Connect to be presented:

WHAT PLANET ARE YOU FROM? By Nikolina Komljenović and Irma Unusic/Croatia



Nikolina and Irma was hanging in the air high above us in ropes before sliding down to the floor to invite us to settle down and participate in their play with objects around them. They explored the space in a playful way with us, creating new sensory landscapes, where something is fragile and uncertain, but can still challenge and accommodate us. 26 people (7 kids) participated in this, which was the first show we presented for families at BIRCA.

DANCING WITH THE TREES by Marilén Ribot/Mallorca



Marilén has started a project where she dances with trees in all the places she stays around the world. She joined us at BIRCA to dance with our trees in the garden, around the chestnut tree and under the ask. And as such connected deeply with the work on rituals connecting with nature that we do at BIRCA.

THE LAUGHING GAME by Antoinette Helbing/Denmark



Antoinette has worked choreographically to investigate laughter - as social communication, bodily state, chuckling sound and exuberant sensation, its infectious power and its liberating effect – and presented this work in this interactive performance that created a lot of laughter.

Together with the Island Connect performances was also presented a family workshop on “Becoming grass” by Danish based artists Linh Le and the dance performance “Margela” by Israeli-Dutch choreographer Keren Rosenberg. So it was a rather large crowd on artists gathering at BIRCA for the event. Fortunately we had Joar to help with tech stuff and Cathrin to cook for us. We did a radio interview and the event was mentioned in the local newspapers, who also join to take photos.



The artistic family at BIRCA