



BIRCA

BÆKKELUND INTERNATIONAL RESIDENCY CENTER FOR ARTISTS

BIRCA ANNUAL REPORT 2024

2024 has again been an exciting year for BIRCA. It was the year, where we took a breather after the large Metropolis Landscapes year as well as reduced the number of residencies in order to be able to keep up. We once again received support from the Danish Arts Foundation for this year's residencies under the title **Laboratory for the new ecological performance art**. We were granted 300,000 DKK. We carried out the two known formats **BIRCA Women** and **BIRCA Kids**. With support from the Nordic-Baltic Mobility Programme for Culture, we completed part 2 of **BIRCA Baltic Sea**, where we had artists from Sweden, Finland, Estonia, and Lithuania on a residency to investigate ecological performance art. And then we speeded up due to our new grant from Creative Europe for the Island Connect project, which has received support for three years with a total of seven island partners. Island Connect including the new partners, also had new formats to be tested: We ran the well known **Artistic Residency** format, the developing **Islander Focus** (where we were also on Saaremaa) and the new **Co-creation** format.

In total, we have had 10 weeks of supported residencies. In addition to this, we have made room for a number of RØSK artists in the latter part of the season – **Andrea Deres & Carolina Bäckman, My Gönholdt, Karolina Pietrzykowska, Linh Le, zden brungot svíteková** and finally **Sustainable Cultural Life NOW**.

In total, 50 performance artists (22 of whom were Danish) plus 6 children visited us in 2024. We have had four external showings at BIRCA with approx. 70 people in the audience plus an audience of 47 people for the Culture Week. We are moving towards bringing together some of the Danish artists working in our field, partly by inviting them in as consultants on individual residencies and partly by giving them room for development. We are also interested in seeing how we can make room for older Danish performance artists in the future.

This year, we have focused even more on ecological performance art; the ecological perspective has been included in all open calls. By delving deeper into this field, we have addressed many exciting new methods and topics. But 2024 will especially stand out as the year we engaged with the sea. Many of this year's projects have dealt with the state of the sea, and during the year we have established an exciting collaboration with the organization "In the Water" in Tejn and marine biologist Miller.

We are becoming increasingly aware of BIRCA's role as a communication and knowledge platform, and therefore we have embarked on the work of archiving performance art research. Bikubenfonden has supported the development of a digital database, **The Circular Performance Archive**, where this year's artistic research projects are archived in a uniform format. The archive will therefore be a significant supplement to this annual report. The CPA database can be accessed [here](#). We are currently in the process of preparing a publication on archiving, and we have invited to a [seminar](#) on the subject on 2/12-24 at the Development Platform in Copenhagen.

We have continued working on our sustainability strategy. We have limited our CO2 footprint from buildings as much as possible, but we still have a high footprint due to travel activity. We have supported artists in traveling by train and ferry where possible. We are aware that a focus on sustainability may mean that we choose artists closer to us in the Nordic countries/Europe, and we are looking at alternative possibilities for future support to artists from more difficult-to-reach countries.

BIRCA WOMEN RESIDENCY 28. April - 12. May

Participating artists/producers

Julia Asperska (PL)

Bek Berger (LV/AUS)

Katerina Kokkinos-Kennedy (AUS)

Camilla Stage (DK)

zden brungot svíteková (CZ)

Cherry Truluck (UK) with Peter and Ernest

This year, the BIRCA Women residency was co-hosted with **Nana-Francisca Schottländer**, who gave a well-received workshop at the Ringebakke quarry as a kickoff of the program. The work explored several themes: geology, rhubarb, aging, nature, and tarot cards. For the first time, we invited two creative producers to participate, hoping this would broaden the conversation about art and artists. It also highlighted the differences between artistic and curatorial approaches.

An immersion into discoveries, study, touch, lengthening, immense gift of a huge studio where layers of work and thoughts find their manifestation. zden

Presentation 10/5 at 17 with 5 external participants



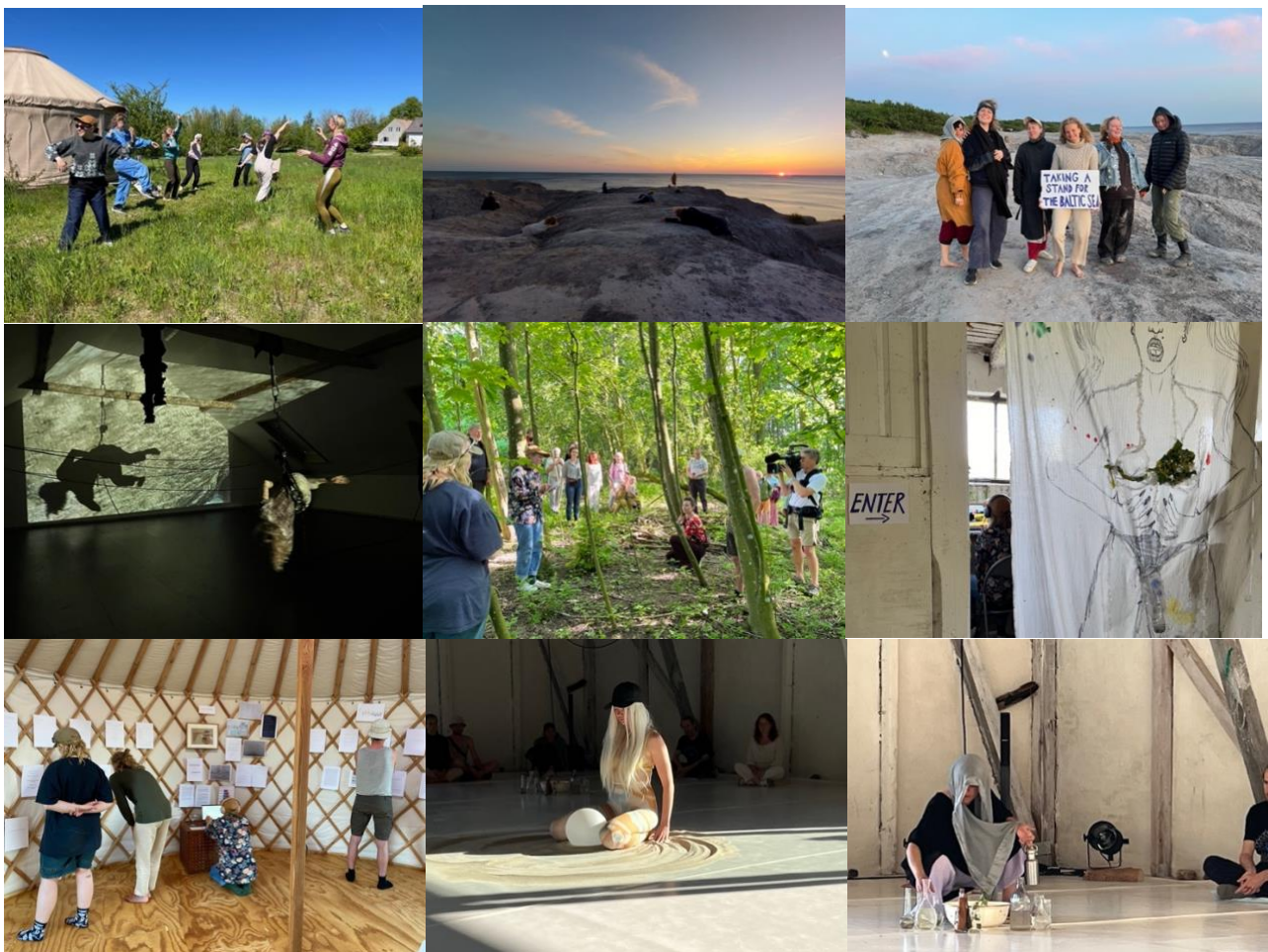
BIRCA BALTIC SEA RESIDENCY 13. - 26. May

Participating artists

Siri Bengtén (SE)
Sanna Hirvonen (FI)
Liina Leo (EE)
Heidi Miikki (FI)
Paula Nousiainen (FI)
Nazaré Soares (LT)

For the second time, we brought together six artists based around the Baltic Sea – from Sweden, Finland, Estonia, and Lithuania – with support from the Nordic-Baltic Mobility Programme for Culture Funding for Residencies. The BIRCA Baltic Sea residency was co-hosted by **Tora Balslev**, who helped select the artists and facilitated a workshop on the first day. She returned to see the presentations and take part in the evaluation. We “Took a stand for the Baltic Sea,” climbed trees, collected water, performed full moon rituals, adopted a porpoise, and much more.

Presentation 24/5 at 17 with an audience of 20 people plus TV2 Bornholm



ISLAND CONNECT

This year, we held three different Island Connect residencies. This was the first year of a new round with support from Creative Europe. BIRCA is in a partnership with Domino/Croatia, CINE/Mallorca, IACC/Ireland, LAV/Tenerife, Sagdenia Teatro/Sardinia, and Theatre Alibi/Corsica. The project aims to create workspace for performing artists and, in addition, to focus on the qualities of island culture through investigations of island identity. All selected artists participated in a joint Springlab in April for all selected Island Connect artists on the island of Vis in Croatia, where they were introduced to various tools and shared knowledge about both their professional work and island culture.

Artistic Residency 25. May – 9. June

Actor/dancer **Nanna Finding Koppel** participated from the Danish side, along with her Italian partner **Marco Colocci**, working with the mermaid as a symbol for the state of the sea. We visited the organization In the Water in Tejn and went on a boat trip. At the same time, **Sara Reyes** from Tenerife joined, working on what she called "Speculative dances". Alena from Sweden also participated for a couple of days. They all also had a two-week residency with our partner LAV on Tenerife.

How does the decay of the Baltic Sea affect the island identity and community? We have been exploring Bornholm in order to dive into that question, field recording and interviewing. Nanna

Presentation 7/6 at 17 with 9 participants



Co-creation 17. – 23. June

BIRCA is responsible for both the development and implementation of this new concept in 2024. We had pre-selected the Danish participant **Ilon Lodewijks**, who facilitated the process and helped choose participants from each of the other islands.

The other artists were

Héctor Gardez (Tenerife) – works with video

Albert Herranz (Mallorca) - scriptwriter

Emma Lohan (Ireland) - musician

Marta Pala (Sardinia) - performer

Kristina Pongrac (Croatia) – visuel artist

One participant from Corsica left the project

The work of the Co-creation group resulted in the concept **The Sea Hotel**, an immersive performance focusing on the state of the sea, which will be finalized and shown in 2025. Along the way, numerous ideas were explored—including a sea spa. We revisited In the Water in Tejn, hiked Hammerknuden, ate ice cream, and had a visit from Lars Rømer. We celebrated both Midsummer (at BIRCA) and St. John's Eve in Gudhjem.



Islander Focus: Saaremaa 12. – 25. August and Bornholm 9. – 22. September

Participating artists

Christina Jonsson (Bornholm) – visual artist (was also on Corsica)

Mari Mäna (Saaremaa) – sculpture/installation

Roman-Sten Tõnissoo (Estonia) – photo/music

Cecilia Molano (Mallorca) – setdesign/video

Islander Focus is an exploratory residency format where artists from diverse backgrounds participate with a clear focus on island identity. This year, we held a pop-up residency (organized by BIRCA) on the Estonian island of Saaremaa. The combination of the two Baltic Sea islands revealed interesting connections—particularly the contrast between the wild Saaremaa and the more cultivated Bornholm. We visited many locations on Saaremaa and on Bornholm, where we participated in the European Ceramic Context and Culture Week events. A wide range of materials were used: photos, videos, music, and items from nature.

A presentation was held during Bornholm Culture Week on September 21st, with 35 attendees. On the Island Connects [website](#) more information on all participants can be found.



BIRCA KIDS RESIDENCY 29. July - 4. August

We only had one residency in the BIRCA Kids program this year, for which we selected two families who were partly acquainted with each other. **My Grønholdt** was responsible for selecting and preparing the families. The program involved working with birds and magical rituals under the chestnut tree, and it included visits to several locations on the island: The birds of prey show, Rispebjerg, the shaman in Rønne, Svartingedalen, Grønbechsgård, and of course, Kalas ice cream in Sandvig. We also had another visit from Lars Rømer, who spoke about the subterranean beings and their connection to magical places.

Participating artists/families

- 1: Helga Rosenfeldt-Olsen/Wunschmaschine with Sune Hede and children Hedvig/8 & Åge/6
- 2: Alaya Riefenstahl/MYRKR with Jesper Riefenstahl and children Buster/10, Carlo/8 & Henry/1,5

The week was full of magical moments, play, manic creativity, ice cream, sunshine, and rocks. Thank you for your generosity and for the opportunity to create as a family in a different way. Helga.

We held an internal showing on August 3rd, where the Boutrup family was invited with their three children.



We are in the process of developing a European network focused on parenthood in the arts. Susanne was invited to Warsaw to give a presentation about BIRCA Kids at the (M)others Dance conference.

ANDRE RESIDENCIES

DDSKS/Laura Navndrup Black and 3 students 22 - 26. April

Andrea Deres & Carolina Bäckman/Danske Dansehistorier – 5. - 7. August

A short visit to write an article and discuss The Circular Performance Archive.

RØSK residencies

We invited RØSK artists to stay at BIRCA free of charge during vacant weeks. This led to pleasant residencies and workshops.

My Grønholdt/MYKA – 12. – 18. August

My spent the time finding her way home and connecting with nature around BIRCA completely alone.

Karolina Pietrzykowska/Enter Octopus – 26. August – 1. September

Karolina developed her new organization, Enter Octopus, and the new performance "Game Over," which is supported by the Danish Arts Foundation.

Christian Gade Bjerrum and Sustainable Cultural Life Now – 2. – 4. September

The six people who make up Sustainable Cultural Life Now were here working on visions for the organization, based on regenerative leadership and organizational practices.

zden brungot svíteková (CZ) - 9. – 22. September

Zden returned to investigate Bornholm's geology, joined the Islander Focus group, and presented with them. Linh Le was also involved as a dancer.

Linh Le – 16. – 22. September – presentation at Bornholms Cultureweek 19/9

Linh found shelter at BIRCA while preparing her performance at Kultippen, "Terra Multorum – The Land of Many," where 44 species each received a stone and a dance at sunset. Two of the stones were brought back to BIRCA as part of the location and for inspiration—the Bechstein's bat (navigation and endurance in the dark) and the eagle owl (broad-spectrum and nuanced perspective on the world).

Cathrin Elenor Nørgaard – presentation at Bornholms Cultureweek 21/9

Cathrin borrowed the white hall during Culture Week to show the beautiful dance performance "A Place In Between," which 47 guests attended.

THE CIRCULAR PERFORMANCE ARCHIVE

We have spent the year creating The Circular Performance Archive (CPA) in collaboration with several key partners and with support from Bikubenfonden. The archive will collect knowledge generated through artistic research processes that take place during residencies. One goal of the archive is to highlight, share, and utilize this knowledge in new ways. Another is to create and strengthen connections between artists working with the same themes, locations, or methods. The archive is accessible online [here](#), where you will also find a more detailed introduction to the ideas behind the archive and how we envision its re-activation. The idea is that the archive will allow us to delve deeper into the artistic material and present the work produced by artists at BIRCA in a way that creates greater resonance and links between artists, themes, and the locations where they worked. Therefore, the archive is can be seen as an extension of this annual report.

SUSTAINABILITY

Since 2022, we have taken a more holistic view of BIRCA's CO2 footprint and environmental impact. This year, the Arts Council closed its carbon calculator, and we have decided not to spend extra time on calculations. We know that we use almost 2 tons of CO2 to run the building from May to October. We optimize this through a heat pump system, good waste sorting, and primarily serving vegan food with locally sourced produce—especially from the local regenerative farm, Hammersly. Approximately 1.5 tons of CO2 are used for car travel on the island, including that of audiences. We know that the most significant part of our footprint comes from artists' travel. Therefore, we encourage artists to travel by train, bus, and ferry—this sometimes requires increased costs and travel time—and the carbon footprint of ferries is also significant, but unavoidable when located on an island. This year, we have limited our CO2 footprint caused by traveling, as most travel has been within the Nordic countries and only limited travel within Europe, with many traveling by train or bus.

TOTAL NUMBERS AND DATA

A total of 50 adult performing artists and 6 children used BIRCA professionally in 2024. We had significantly more female artists (37) than male (11), with 2 identifying themselves as queer. Diversity in terms of ethnicity and national representation was not as high as in previous years. Just under half of the residency guests were Danish (22), while the rest had diverse international backgrounds, coming from the following countries: Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Croatia, Italy, Spain, Ireland, England, and Australia.

We only held four external showings (plus one smaller internal showing for BIRCA Kids) this season, with an audience ranging between 5 and 35 guests. The smaller groups increased intensity and intimacy, providing attendees with sensory and emotional experiences followed by in-depth discussions afterwards. In addition, Cathrin's dance performance during Culture Week had 47 attendees.

We haven't been as active in the press this year. There have been a few articles in Bornholms Tidende, along with a larger profile of Susanne Danig, and TV2 Bornholm covered the Baltic Sea showing. Furthermore, the Klyngeavisen newspaper has been good at writing about us. We have regularly sent out newsletters and have been active on Facebook, now having 1633 followers (an increase of 159 since 2023).

The BIRCA Residency association is led by a board consisting of **Ida Marie Tjalve** (chairperson), **Bente Larsen** (vice-chairperson), **Tine Nygaard**, **Lars Rømer**, and **Jens Frimann Hansen**. **Susanne Danig** is appointed to manage the association's daily operations and is compensated according to the activities undertaken.

This year, the main building at BIRCA has been renovated and is currently being repainted yellow.

