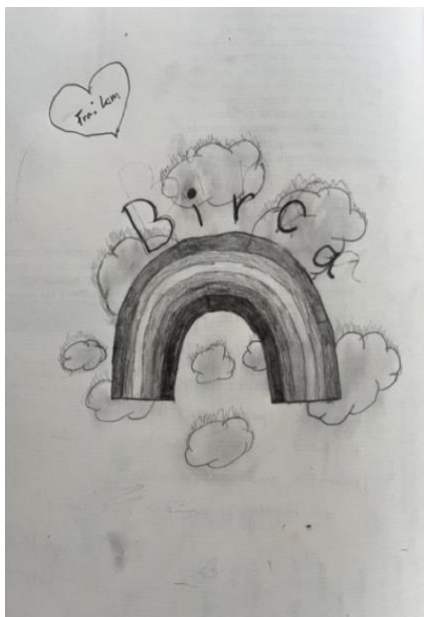




# BIRCA

BÆKKELUND INTERNATIONAL RESIDENCY CENTER FOR ARTISTS

## BIRCA ANNUAL REPORT 2025



2025 has again been an exciting year for BIRCA with a very full program of artists almost every week. We have received 2-year funding of DKK 400,000 per year from the Danish Arts Foundation under the title **Laboratory and archiving within new ecological performing arts**. We hosted **BIRCA Kids** for the sixth year in a row, this year with 3 weeks dedicated to testing different constellations, and we have now entered a phase where the need for experience-gathering regarding learning and methods has arisen. This year, we chose to replace the past years' BIRCA Women residencies with a new format, **BIRCA eco MATTER**, focusing on ecology and materiality with international outreach. We tested yet another new concept with **BIRCA Senior**, aimed at Danish performing artists aged 50+. We started the second year of our Creative Europe funding for the **Island Connect project**, which has received 3-year support with a total of 7 European island partners. We carried out the established **Artistic Residency** format and the developing **Islander Focus** at BIRCA and sent an artist to the **Co-creation** format in Mallorca. All residencies had open calls with many applications. BIRCA eco MATTER alone attracted 230.

In total, we have hosted 11 weeks of funded residencies at BIRCA and 2 weeks on a Turkish island. In addition, we have provided space for residencies for **DDSKS/Laura Navndrup Black** and **10 students from the Master's programs Dance & Participation and Choreography**, the **Sea Stories project** in the Nordic region, the **iCoDaCo project** with Cunts Collective as leader, **Pipaluk** with contact impro, and the **Scáthach project** with **Tina Robinson**.

Finally, this year we had a large program during the Bornholm Culture Week with 6 different performances and a premiere of a documentary film about fishing on Bornholm – with a total of 19 artists and 3 children in action and with 204 participants. One of the performances was part of the European project **(M)others on tour** with support from Perform Europe.

In total, 78 performing artists (of whom 42 are Danish), 18 children, and 10 other guests stayed at BIRCA in 2025. We have had 6 presentations at BIRCA with 46 audience members in the residency program, plus 13 presentations for 204 people during Culture Week. This year, we have also seen a diverse representation of artists, including children and seniors, gender diversity, and we have once again experienced great diversity in working fields and methods. We have increased our focus on curating and developing themed residencies, inspired by and in collaboration with some of the Danish artists closest to us. These artists have been invited in as consultants for individual residencies, and have also been given space for development.

We have continued the ecological perspective and expanded it by incorporating archiving as part of the practice, a perspective that will be included in future Island Connect projects. We remain aware of our CO2 footprint but must balance this with the desire to work internationally.

## **BIRCA Eco MATTER 28. April – 11. May**

### Participating artists:

Alicja Czyczal/Poland

Camilla Brogaard/Denmark+Germany

Meline Saoirse/France+Portugal

Oliver Sale/Norway+UK

Robert Lisek/Poland+Germany

Francine Dulong/Canada

**BIRCA Eco MATTER** was co-hosted with Tora Balslev, who opened the residency with a joint workshop in BIRCA's fields and forest.

The group of artists consisted of choreographers, physical performers, and musicians of varying ages and nationalities, had very different approaches to materiality and created different relationships with each other and with nature. They worked with the ritual, the metaphysical, and with nature, with language and with video.

*The cursing crows fly low out here. Cedar trees crawl with weeping critters. Sweetness of our naked bodies in the sea under full moon in Scorpio – I ache to reborn - restore.*

Research presentations took place on May 10 at 4 PM with 14 participants.





## BIRCA SENIOR RESIDENCY 1. – 14. September

### Participating artists – all Danish

Ellen Kilsgaard

Katrine Faber

Line Svendsen

Pernille Koch

Peter Vadim

Samt Camilla Stage som også var co-curator



6 experienced Danish performing artists, a group of just over 50, one nearing 60, and two in their 60s - and thus also slightly different experiences with age. But all with a great need to exchange thoughts on what happens when one gets older and is no longer the new hope. What can one contribute with one's age and experience? Many trips were taken and much swimming, preferably at sunset on Hasle beach. The island, nature, and its stories were absorbed. Fellowship and shared movement were cultivated through daily morning training. Sensitivity was explored and beautifully used in the presentation.

*Splash. Plish. Beautiful again. We buzzed in the stable when radar finally got wings. We were beautiful. We were together. We were a clump. A loving clump. The kindest clump. We found each other again and again. We found each other. We found ourselves in a stream of spider webs, nets, reeds. Without us we would not exist. Peter*

Presentation on September 13 at 4 PM with 30 participants during Culture Week, with photos by Anne Lass.



## ISLAND CONNECT

This year, we hosted 2 Island Connect residencies at BIRCA, and we contributed with one participant to the joint Co-creation residency. It was the second year of a new round with support from Creative Europe. Partners, in addition to BIRCA, include: Domino/Croatia, CINE/Mallorca, IACC/Ireland, LAV/Tenerife, Sagdenia Teatro/Sardinia, and Theatre Alibi/Corsica. The project, besides creating working spaces for performing artists, focuses on qualities of island culture through explorations of island identity. All selected artists participated in a joint Springlab in April with all selected Island Connect artists and partners in Tenerife, where they were introduced to local artists from the island and had the opportunity to discuss island culture while forming networks across the board.

### Artists sent out from BIRCA

**Camilla Siddu** – Co-creation in Mallorca in June.

**Christina Jonsson** - Islander Focus in Madeira and Vis in June/July.

### **Artistic Residency at BIRCA June 16-29**

Tanya Montan Rydell with participants Esther Wrobel, Lucia Jaen Serrano and Nina in the project "Endurance", which was also sent to IACC in Ireland. Laetitia Brighi and Syd Reynal from Corsica/France Camilla Siddu also visited for 3 days to take a piece of Bornholm with her for Co-Creation.

This year's Island Connect residency focused on trees. Work was done on vertical dance in the oak trees in BIRCA's forest in the project "Endurance" and the relationship between horizontal and vertical was explored. A research question was also posed: Laetitia set out to investigate if she could get Syd to prove that she could talk to trees in the project "Sylvia, Prouver et Eprouver" – along the way they gave up, Laetitia surrendered to her intuition and wrote "Laetitia's Unfinished Science book" in parallel, arguing for the existence of polyphonic and symphonic truths.

*Thank you for giving space to "Endurance" a new project is always a risk, and it is amazing how BIRCA can hold uncertainties, slowness, speculations and proposals with so much warmth and acceptance - Tanya*

Presentation on June 18 with 8 participants.





#### Islander Focus 4. - 17. August

##### Participating artists

Rickard Borgström and Rebecca Chentinell/Sweden with children Sultana and Maria  
Guro Rokstad Clausen/Norway

*We follow the dream tracks of the elders Through the island's chakra, via the sun temple to the Crystal Lake. We ask ourselves what the sea has to tell and what gifts it gives. We listen. Making kinship.*

Islander Focus is an investigative residency format where artists with different backgrounds participate with a focus on island identity. This year, we collaborated with two new Nordic partners who will be part of the future network: DACE in Sweden and Eilertsen & Granados Theater Company from Norway. They sent Rickard/Rebecca and Guro, respectively. At the same time, Susanne visited the Nordic Culture Point in Helsinki in February and participated in the opening of their new residency center on the island of Suomelinna – they will also be future partners in Island Connect. All 3 locations this year also hosted artists from various places in Europe for their pop-up residencies. The last one was held on Åland, where Rickard and Rebecca had invited participants to a gathering under the title Currents of Kinship – here Susanne participated with a large group of artists in investigations of the sea. A continuation of the work started in August at BIRCA, where the group, among other things, participated in a workshop in Tejn with Miller, leader of I vandet. We also went on a trip to energy spots on the southern island with Bodil Egeberg, for dancing with Cathrin Nørlund and on a boat trip with MS Thor.

Presentation on August 15 with a beautiful group of 14 people and a long artist talk afterwards.



## RECONNECT THE ISLAND – Tyrkiet 19. May - 2. June

This year we made a very special collaboration with the focus on learning more about artists from the SWANA region. We don't know enough about the many artists outside Europe, and it can be difficult to curate artists without knowing more about the specific context they work in. There are security issues for many of the artists, and there are severe VISA problems if you want to invite artists from, for example, the SWANA region. Reconnect is a project run by two Iranians, Nima Deghani and Naghmed Manavi, in collaboration with Giuli Grippo from Spain and The Festival Academy. They have created both an online format and The Island project, where they invite artists to a Turkish island (deliberately unknown for security reasons). This year, BIRCA supported 4 artists to participate: Nadeem Mazen from Palestine, Patricia Habchy from Lebanon, who works with Tuba Emiroglu from Turkey, and finally Lei Am from Iran. Susanne Danig participated in workshops, presentations, and showings. Next year, we will invite Patricia and Tuba for a residency at BIRCA.



## BIRCA KIDS RESIDENCY 30. June - 20. July

This year we held 3 weeks of BIRCA Kids. We started with a joint workshop for all participating families on June 11 with Susanne and My Grønholdt (co-curator) Copenhagen. This provided a good introduction to the framework at BIRCA, the idea behind BIRCA Kids, and methods for engaging children.

### Participating families

June 30-July 6 - Carolina Bäckman with Jan, Kim (10) and Ilon (5) plus Andrea Deres with Kristian and Lau (3)  
July 7-13 - Sara Vilardo with Sonja, Sofie, Thelma (4) and Nemo (4) plus Sophie Grodin with Max and Alvin (5) and Helen Schröder visiting  
July 14-20 - Katrine Karlsen with Viktor, Rita (12) and her helper Maja, Rebecca Arthy with Hugo (12) and Sif Hymøller with Mads, Solveig (10) and Folke (7)

The first week, the two families worked closely together, and there was a lot of movement and work with natural elements, and then there was poem-fishing. A presentation was made on July 5 with visits from Ida Tjalve, Manon Duquesnay, and Laura Navndrup Black, along with 3 children.





BIRCAs poemfish from week 1  
(practice where one fishes for words laid on the floor):

Silence  
Scent of coconut  
leaf of fig  
I am a ly  
Shadow of a swallow



The second week, Helen Steensbæk Schrøder was our co-host, and we went on several excursions: to the agricultural museum to feed pigs and drive a tractor, to the circus in Soldalen, and to Thomas Hejlesen's Kinohotel to see robot theater before we had a moon ritual with Alaya Riefensthal at the "harachakra" at Rispebjerg. Work was done with kaolin clay, dance instructions were made, and stories were created. Thelma went out to find the elves, and it became a nice little film. Finally, work was done with ghost animals and owls. We had a presentation on July 12 with a visit from Peter Vadim and his father.





The third week was occupied by 3 puppet theater people with Ida Tjalve as co-host. Work was done with music (especially Rita) and a lot of disco dancing (children took turns making playlists in the evenings). Work was done with natural elements in art projects – beautiful butterflies, light effects, sculptures. And Hugo revisited the troll forest, where he had made films and played a little bear as a child. There was also a campfire evening and a visit to the Medieval Center. Presentation on July 12 with 2 guests.



## OTHER RESIDENCIES

**DDSKS/Laura Navndrup Black and 10 students from Master's programs in Dance & Participation and Choreography - May 12 - 16**

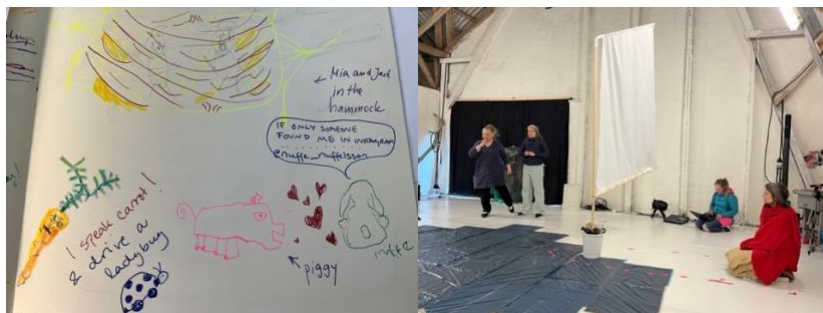




**SEA stories with Outi Sippola/Fi, Lena S. Kohut/SE and Ida Tjalve/DK 18 – 30. May**

Work on the Nordic children's theater performance with objects focusing on sea stories was later completed in Finland and returned during the Bornholm Culture Week, where it was shown at the Circus Building in Sandvig.

Lena had her family as guests – Simon and children Mia and Jack.



**ICoDaCo residency with Cunts Collective – Rezm/Portugal, Dani/Germany Naia/Spain, Tone/DK, Sara/Italy and Peter/DK - 2-23. June**



Cunts Collective presented their research at this year's Folkemøde (People's Meeting) on the new art scene for a smaller group of people.

*May the cunt-pig protect BIRCA and bring joy and creativity to all the artists about to come to this beautiful place.*

**Contact impro with Pipaluk – 18. – 24. August**

12 dancers and a baby danced for a week in the hall and on the beach.

**Scáthach with Tina Robinson, Helen Tennison and Jeanette Sollén – 25. – 30. August**



An investigation into the story of the female warrior Scáthach.

*Rock, stone, tree, feathers, birds, bees, home. We can breathe here.*

**Island Connect visit by Zvonimir Dubrovic and Barbara Rovere 13. - 15. Oktober**



## BORNHOLMS CULTURE WEEK

In addition to the presentations by experienced performing artists, this year we had a quite extensive program during Bornholm Culture Week, all supported by and presented in collaboration with Culture Week. We were hit by a major storm along the way and had to cancel and change performances. 6 performances with 19 artists and 3 children on stage were shown, along with a film. In total, 204 audience.

**September 14 & 15 - Performing landscapes with Katrine Faber and Sara Vilardo** - 32 participants  
Aline and Trevor Davies, along with Sara's daughter Thelma, participated from Metropolis.

*Thank you for wonderful hospitality!*

**September 16 & 17 - The Sea Hotel, Danish premiere** - 29 participants

The Sea Hotel/Havhotellet was created under the Island Connect project, and BIRCA produced the performance, which was first shown on the island of Vis in Croatia in April. The performance was created under the Co-creation format with an original residency on Bornholm in 2024, where artists explored the sea around Bornholm together. It has become a fun and educational immersive performance, which we hope will travel more into the world.

### Involved artists were:

Ilon Lodewijks (Netherlands/Denmark), who with her platform Out of Office takes over touring  
Héctor Gardez (Tenerife) - performer  
Albert Herranz (Mallorca) – script/video  
Emma Lohan (Ireland) – musician  
Marta Pala (Sardinia) - performer  
Kristina Pongrac (Croatia) - set design

Photos were taken by Anne Lass and video by Benny Thailbert.



**18 & 19/9 – Himmelbåren by Wunschmaschine** - 33 participants

Helga Rosenfeldt Olsen, Alaya Riefensthal and Nini Julia Bang came and showed their lovely bird performance in BIRCA's garden.





## 20 & 21/9 – Codomestication by BIRCA/Spine Fiction Danish Premiere – 20 participants



On stage were the two choreographers and mothers My Nilsson and Andrea Deres with their children Tove, nearly 5, and Lau, nearly 4. The children were co-determinant in what happened on stage. Their creativity and responses were central. The concept was originally created by Krõõt Juurak/Estonia & Alex Bailey/UK and has been performed for several years by the two co-parents and their 3-5-year-old child. Now they have passed on the concept. The project is supported by Perform Europe and has also been shown by other performing artists with children elsewhere in Europe.

Anne Lass took photos, and we hope the performance will continue to tour in the Nordic region under Spine Fiction



**20/9 – premiere of the film "The Island without Fishermen" by Albert Herranz Hammer** at Scala Gudhjem with 60 participants. An affectionate documentary about what the death of fishing does to us as humans, supported by Bornholm Regional Municipality and Brd. Larsens Legat.

## THE CIRCULAR PERFORMANCE ARCHIVE

We have continued working with The Circular Performance Archive (CPA), where knowledge created in artistic research processes at BIRCA is collected. A goal of the archive is to visualize, share, and utilize this knowledge in new ways, which we have truly been able to initiate this year by encouraging artists to use the archive as inspiration. Through the archive, which can be accessed online [here](#), one can gain a deeper understanding of all the artists who have been at BIRCA this year. There are interviews with all artists and insights into themes, considerations, and insights from the processes. In this way, the archive is a significant supplement to this annual report. We hope that the work done at BIRCA will thus gain greater resonance and more visible connections between artists and themes.

## SUSTAINABILITY

Since 2022, we have taken a more overarching look at BIRCA's CO2 and environmental footprint. After the Danish Agency for Culture closed its calculator, we have not made concrete calculations of our CO2 footprint. We know that we use almost 2 tons of CO2 to run the house from May to October. Here we optimize with a heat pump system and good waste sorting. Primarily vegan food is served, and local food is purchased – especially from the local regenerative farm Hammersly. We also know that CO2 is used for transportation on the island with artists, and that there is an imprint from our audience, as BIRCA is difficult to reach without a car, but we do not have the right tools or time to measure the concrete footprint.

We know that the absolute most significant part of our footprint comes from artists' travel. We therefore support artists traveling by train/bus/ferry – which sometimes requires increased expenses and time. The

CO2 footprint for ferries is also large, but unavoidable when one is on an island. It is unavoidable that the higher the activity level at BIRCA, and the more international it is, the higher our CO2 footprint.

It is important for us that our forest, which is left completely wild, absorbs about 10 tons of CO2 annually, and that BIRCA's lands provide space for masses of animals, birds, and insects to thrive. Everyone who comes here enjoys meeting butterflies, as well as seeing birds of prey and deer. We provide space for the trees and all living organisms that thrive here.

## SAMLEDE TAL OG DATA

In total, 78 adult performing artists with 18 children professionally used BIRCA in 2025 – some of them have been here multiple times. We have absolutely most female artists, namely 58, only 16 men, and 4 queer identifying. In addition, there are 10 guests. Diversity in terms of ethnicity and national spread has not been as great as last year. Just over half are Danish (42), the other 36 have a broad international background, and they came from the following countries: Sweden, Norway, Finland, Poland, Germany, Portugal, France, Spain, Italy, Croatia, England, Canada, Iran, Palestine, Lebanon, Turkey.

In the residency program, we held 6 smaller presentations (including 3 small internal ones for BIRCA Kids) during the season with approx. 46 guests. The small audience groups have increased intensity and intimacy, and it has given people sensory and emotional experiences with room for deeper conversations afterwards. In addition, during Culture Week, 6 performances were shown 12 times, along with a film, with a total of 204 audience members. Finally, approx. 30 to 40 people met the artists in Turkey.

We have not been very active press-wise this year, so there have only been a few mentions in Bornholms Tidende and Dennes Uges Bornholm is primarily mentioned in the calendar. The cluster newspaper is good at writing about us. We send out newsletters regularly and have been active on Facebook, where we have about 1650 followers.

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

This year, the main house at BIRCA was painted yellow again – and Marta Pala made a painting of it. Niels built another shed. And Susanne started a project of writing an essence of each residency on a stone and placing it around the chestnut tree.

