

PROTOCOL
third meeting

The meeting took place at Mime Centrum.

Attendance:

Gabi Beier, Benjamin Pohlig, Moritz Majce, Anne Passow, Kareth Schaffer, Karin Kirchhoff, Sunniva Vikør Egenes, Marie Schneider, Nik Haffner, Sabine Köhncke

1. Introduction

The meeting was led by Karin Kirchhoff, with a protocol by Benjamin Pohlig.

Following last time's meeting that concluded with wanting to continue the work on 1) the current funding system (how much, for what?) 2) the jury model (what are alternatives) 3) the Dancer's Fee (Tanzhonorar), the group decided to focus first on funding after which a discussion of the Tanzhonorar followed.

2. The current system

Individual positions are being discussed. Such as the change of the Einstiegsförderung from a scholarship scheme to a proper funding model which demands a proper budget declaration at the end of the project. This is meant to accommodate the fact that almost all Einstiegs applications are mostly planned as small projects and almost never as research periods.

Furthermore the separation between Konzeptions- und Basisförderung is being welcomed. Although it seems like artists who have their own houses might again be able to apply for Konzept, after all.

The point is raised that currently Basisförderung even though intended to cover the running costs and production costs of an artist and their production team is simply too small to do so. This means that artists are dependent on Drittmittel / Co-production to realise the projects they intended to do under Basisförderung.

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Even though in principle the current funding system is understood to be working. The obvious problems such as the lack of financial backup and the high volume of artists that try to either enter the system or try to stay in it is thought to be overwhelming.

It is pointed out that the idea is that the funding system would allow someone who enters to slowly move up from Einstiegs, to Einzel, to eventually receiving Basisförderung. At the same moment, it is intended for people that are high up in this scheme, to move down when they loose Basisförderung for example. However, this is not always or rarely possible due to the high number of artists and lack of money.

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Thus two possible gaps are identified in the current funding system.

First) Between Einstiegs und Projektförderung. Many artist that receive Einstiegsförderung then fail to secure Projektförderung and struggle to enter the system.

Second) for established artists that drop out of Basisförderung. Artists that have for many years received funding might face a total cut in funding once they loose Basis since a return to Einzelprojekt or other funding is not always possible.

Both these gaps point at a struggle to create sustainability in the Berlin dance scene and its funding system.

What are alternatives in other countries to deal with older artists? The possibility of mentoring younger artists is mentioned.

3. dancer's fee / Tanzhonorar

From here the discussion shifted to the dancer's fee / Tanzhonorar. The basic idea is that a complimentary funding branch to the current project oriented funding system could alleviate some of the problems already existing, especially in regards to sustainability.

To understand the possibilities of such a model the Tanzhonorar group had researched the Norwegian Model closer. The Norwegian dance union considers the public arts scholarships / statens kunstnerstipend to be the only and most efficient solution to support the artists' economy in the long run. The scholarships are eligible both for dancers and dance makers. They are set up to cover around 50% of the median yearly income. This is to secure a solid basis from which to start working. Not to cover living in full but to enable artistic practice and work. The scholarships are quite diverse and cover young artists (with a length of 1-3 years), mid career artists (1-5 years) and senior artists (1-10 years). Furthermore, there are also smaller scholarships that cover various activities (research, etc.). The recipients of the scholarships have to hand in a written yearly report about their artistic activities. This system in Norway is complementary to the project funding system, and is intended to allow for a basis to work from, but not to be the sole financial foundation for artistic work. The scholarships are taxed and the state is paying the employer's tax contribution towards the welfare system. In 2017 about 8400 applied for a scholarship and 882 received it. This is across all art fields and the whole scholarship spectrum, not just the dance scene.

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Sweden has a similar scholarship system with much smaller sums.

Besides this scholarship program, there is also an unemployment scheme in Norway carried by the Skuespiller- og Danseralliansen that is more similar to the systems in place such as France, Belgium and Sweden.

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The group discusses in length the effects such a complimentary funding system could have on the scene. Would this be a way to cover the already unpaid work that freelance dancer and dance makers have to do? The work that has to be done to secure paid work? Would this allow people who focus on being performers and dancers rather than being both performers and makers find a place in the funding system? Would a system like this allow dancers who are low on the economic ladder to secure stability in regards to their physical expiration date? Would this lead

to less "precarity solos"? The solos / duets that are being made with no funding, just to be able to keep working while being attractive to the market because of being cheap to make and tour?

How would it be possible to argue for a system like this in Berlin? How to show that this could lead to an increase in the quality of work?

It is overall agreed that in some form, for at least a pocket of people for a pocket of time, a similar system would alleviate the economic pressures and enable people to make choices. Obviously the question of where Berlin would get money from to implement such a system and at what scale such a system could be implemented remains open or unsure. However, the group discussed the value of either demanding for such a system in full in order to illustrate the urgency and need for something like that and the danger of watering down any such model to fit the chronically underfunded system in Berlin at the moment.

4. Further thoughts and conclusion of meeting

Another point to the discussion around the current project focused funding system and methods to compliment it is brought up and asks whether an infrastructural, physical space that offers free rehearsal space and / or classes and workshops for free or cheap to the dance scene could alleviate some of the problems and costs of being a freelance artist.

It is mentioned that the Senatsverwaltung is looking into securing a Arbeitsraumprogramm for the dance scene as other art fields already have one. How this space would operate and who would have access to it, is not clear yet (residency program? Space for established companies?). Independent Dance in London is brought up as an example as a space where the community can both meet and exchange ideas, take class. In Norway the organisation PRODA offers daily classes and workshops to the dance scene for cheap.

Would this be an option instead of the Tanzhonorar, or another complimentary, a third branch to the system? An infrastructure that is funded to support freelance artists and their needs?

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The group finishes with the following tasks that would be useful to answer before and then discuss at the next meeting.

- 1) What would improve the artistic life in Berlin right now?
- 2) Make up different models of how to implement the Tanzhonorar (for example, every single dance artist should get 1000€ a month), and compare models at next meeting.
- 3) Collect arguments for why to prioritize one funding model or change over the other (i.e. why is it more important to implement a better dance infrastructure than a Tanzhonorar, or the other way around)