

## Q&A – Selected Works festival

Selected Works festival gives the public the opportunity to experience a collected presentation of newly developed and experimental performing arts, and thus highlights the efforts of the independent field to develop the performing arts.

What is the “Independent Field”?

The Independent Field refers to the many varying – professional – groups or artists in the performing arts (producers, directors, choreographers, playwrights, writers of performing arts texts, dramaturgists, performers, actors, dancers, artists, etc.) who are not affiliated with any established theatre or institution, and who typically work to produce performing arts from project to project.

When did the festival begin?

Selected Works was held for the first time in 2014 at the ‘Dansehallerne’ venue in Copenhagen. The festival was an integral part of CPH STAGE for the first few years, but that changed with the 2018 festival, when Selected Works broke away from CPH STAGE and became an independent festival.

Who is behind the festival?

In the period 2014–2016 the interest group *Uafhængige Scenekunstnere* (US) (Independent Performing Artists) and the society *Scenekunstnere Uden Scene* (SUS) (Performing Artists Without A Stage) initiated, organized and raised funds for the festival. In 2016, Selected Works Association was founded, and an artistic leadership was set up to ensure that the festival would be developed to its full potential. The festival is curated by a changing team of professional performing artists selected by the festival’s partners, who possess in-depth knowledge of the Independent Field in the Danish performing arts.

The festival is supported by the Danish Arts Foundation’s Project Support Committee for the Performing Arts, the Performing Arts Committee of the City of Copenhagen, the City of Aarhus and a number of foundations.

## Why do you hold the festival?

In the Danish performing arts scene, there are a very large number of professional performing artists who do not have a permanent venue or theatre behind them, and/or who only have very limited means available for continuous operations. They typically work from project to project and receive their production funding partly from foundations, etc., and partly from the various funding pools of the Ministry of Culture, and they are often involved in representing Danish performing arts abroad.

The Independent Field is a diverse field of performing arts which often differs in terms of genre from what is presented in established theatres. The production support available for individual projects is often only enough to allow a venue to be rented for a short period of time, and too many works thus have too short a lifespan and reach too small an audience. Visibility is important for this part of the performing arts community, because it is often here that new things happen, and where radical performing arts experiments are created.

There are thus some performing arts genres that 'live in the shadows', often falling outside the profiles of established theatres, and whose existence is therefore unknown to a large part of the public. But there are some gems hidden here that are too often overlooked in the vast array of sources of entertainment available to audiences.

The festival has so far presented a total of over 70 works to the public, including readings.

## Curation and work process

Since its inception, the programme for the festival has been drawn up by a team of curators which changes every year. The continuous renewal of the team ensures innovation, dynamism, diversity and variety in the selection of works. For the 2022/23 festival, two curators have been appointed by our partner stages: Åbne Scene and Bora Bora in Aarhus have appointed one curator, and Toaster in Copenhagen, which includes the stages Den Frie Udstillingsbygning and Husets Teater, has similarly appointed one curator. One of the festival's two artistic directors was given a place on the curatorial committee to secure diversity and high quality in the selected works, and to ensure that the selection was realistic to implement with the festival's resources.

Any professional performing artists can apply to participate in the festival via an open call. For the 2022/23 festival there were 52 applicants, and 11 works were selected.

Once the works have been selected, the planning begins. This involves identifying, formulating and meeting the technical requirements for the individual works, and on this basis it is planned where the individual projects can be performed. If they are to be performed in a specific location, there can be a lot of practical tasks in this connection. Then the PR has to be done, the ticket sales have to be set up and the programme must be launched. The festival itself is like a giant jigsaw puzzle that our technical team must coordinate in collaboration with the artists, venues and other partners.

What is the vision for the festival?

The vision for the festival is to strengthen and make visible the independent field of performing artists in Denmark, both with regard to the audience, the established performing arts industry and international stakeholders (festival producers, curators etc.).

There are many thoughts and ideas about the future development of Selected Works. It is still the dream that the festival will continue its activities in Copenhagen and Aarhus, but also that it will in future be able to tour to the cities of Odense and Aalborg. We believe that this will contribute to a greater diversity in the range of the performing arts presented across the country. The Independent Field aims to make contact with a new, broad audience, and thereby also strengthen and qualify the food chain and synergies between stakeholders in the Danish performing arts environment.

We remain convinced that there is a need for a festival like Selected Works, which focuses 100% on works from the Independent Field, ensures access to stage capacity and visibility for the Independent Field – both nationally and internationally – and provides a context for the many stakeholders in the Independent Field.