

COPENHAGEN ARCHITECTURE FESTIVAL CAFx

KØBENHAVN AARHUS AALBORG ODENSE

Q&A WITH FESTIVAL DIRECTOR JOSEPHINE MICHAU

Josephine Michau is the founder, director and conductor of Copenhagen Architecture Festival since its start in 2014. The festival was founded in 2014 by Josephine Michau, Peter Møller Rasmussen and Mads Farsø.

What inspired you to start Copenhagen Architecture Festival?

Architecture is a field for unending research, a field that affects us all, constantly, in a wide variety of ways. CAFx's hope is to help show, investigate and raise awareness of how architecture affects our lives and world – and how our lives and world affect our architecture. How, where, and why is it that architecture makes a difference? This is why we started the festival, which, to my great pleasure, has grown every year.

What is the ambition behind CAFx?

My ambition with the festival is to expand the idea of what architecture is and can do; to make architecture understood as something more than just brick, space or structure, but as a sensual, corporeal, social, political and human element that influences every aspect of our lives. I hope we can examine how architecture enhances the quality of everyday life at local, national and global levels and do it in an unpretentious, curious way that can bring to the table a new perspective on architecture and disseminate it widely.

What is the focus of the program this year?

Our program has never been broader or more popular than this year, because it's about home – something that applies to all of us and is eternally relevant, maybe more so than ever because a home is no longer something we can take for granted. Having a home is becoming more of a privilege than a human right.

What kind of events can the public expect at the festival?

We have included many guided tours, because we can see from previous years that our audience is very interested in them – they are, in general, very committed to their city and its architecture. But of course, we also have more academic content, including several conferences and seminars along with some of our movie and debate events.

What are some of the festival highlights you would not want to miss?

This year, I am particularly looking forward to our cooperation with BL – Denmark’s General Housing, with whom we will host both open air and private film screenings in social housing complexes which are often only known through the stories the media tells about them such as Gellerup, Mjølnerparken and Vollsmose, as well as a major Nordic conference on affordable housing.

I also look forward to the visit of Anupama Kundoo, who is a whirlwind of positive energy on top of the fact that she makes very beautiful buildings. Her thoughts about collectivity and social sustainability are common threads through much of our program, and we have invited some really sharp and inspiring people to explore the topics in different ways.

I’m also going to stop by the Danish Architecture Center in BLOX, where we have asked fashion researcher Ane Lynge-Jorlén to curate a smaller program about the body, fashion and architecture, and I’ll attend as many lectures as I can with our guests such as Rafael Moneo, Brandlhuber + Roth, Urbanus, Niklas Maak, Kundoo & Gehl. There are also many guided tours that I would like to go on if time permits, and it will be truly exciting this year to see how the Odensians experience the festival.

What were your ambitions when starting Copenhagen Architecture Festival?

In 2018, the festival is entering its fifth year. Since its inception in 2014, the festival has worked to create a dynamic and contemporary platform to disseminate the importance of architecture in Denmark in relation to abroad. The festival explores how architecture impacts our lives and world- and how our lives and world affect architecture.

The festival’s ambition is to expand the idea of what architecture is and can do: to present architecture as something more than just brick, space, or structure, but as a sensual, corporeal, social, political and human element that influences every aspect of our lives. The festival explores how and where architecture makes these differences. Our ambition has always been to share architecture with a wide audience by being unpretentious, curious, and bringing a new perspective to the table.

By 2015, CAFx became the world’s largest festival of its kind with its particular focus on architecture and film. Demand has risen, and the festival has expanded its activities to Aarhus (since 2015), Aalborg (since 2016), and now Odense (starting in 2018), all cities that, like Copenhagen, have a strong architectural identity. This year’s festival will include several major events in each city.

What are the goals behind the festival?

“Architecture is a field for unending research, a field that affects us all, constantly, in a wide variety of ways. CAFx’s hope is to help show, investigate and raise awareness of how architecture affects our lives and world – and how our lives and world affect our architecture. How, were, and why is it that architecture makes a difference? This is why we started the festival, which, to my great pleasure, has grown every year. My ambition with the festival is to expand the idea of what architecture is and can do; to make architecture understood as something more than

just brick, space or structure, but as a sensual, corporeal, social, political and human element that influences every aspect of our lives. I hope we can examine how architecture enhances the quality of everyday life at local, national and global levels and do it in an unpretentious, curious way that can bring to the table a new perspective on architecture and disseminate it widely.

We want to create new encounters between subjects, people, and ideas in the city's space. The intention is for architecture to act as a character in the dialogue through the audience's personal experiences of the spaces. Architecture is thus for everyone- not just for architects. Through a public program of film screenings, exhibitions, lectures, debates, city walks, bicycle tours, workshops, conferences, and more, CAFx seeks to showcase the wide breadth of the architecture field and show how architecture can enhance or diminish qualities in everyday life on local, national and global scales. And again this year, the festival has assembled some of the most innovative thinkers from home and abroad to open up the diverse world of architecture.

What can you say about the program for CAFx2018?

For our 2018 edition, our framework for the program is the theme HOUSING HOMES, in which we will explore the ideas of home, housing and belonging. We will look at what constitutes a home, what does it mean to be home, and how homes are created in different and difficult situations. We will use the festival as a platform to investigate how we respond to various present-day challenges such as climate change, migration, rising house prices, increased urbanization and segregation, changing demographics, among other issues, in our way of living and organizing ourselves- both privately and as a city, individually and collectively, at home and abroad, in the past, present and future.

This year, the audience can experience, among other things, the world premiere of The Human Shelter- a poetic odyssey on film about what constitutes a home, or take your pick from 56 other film titles to be shown around the cities; come to open air screenings in Mjølnerparken, Gellerup and Vollsmose or to open houses to see studios and the inner workings of otherwise closed-to-the-public institutions; take a bike tour of the city's newest buildings guided by Copenhagen's city architect; vote for the Copenhagen Building Awards; watch a film about Lene Tranberg in her latest building project, the Axeltowers; participate in lectures, exhibitions and workshops on collective living in Space10 or come to a biodynamic, long-table dinner in Frederiksberg, among many other events offered this year.'

Films take up an important part of the program. Could you tell us more about that?

Through film, we put the spotlight on famous architects and their practices as well as profiles of iconic works of architecture, big-city melting pots and film directors such as Agnès Varda and Carl Th. Dreyer, who use film to investigate personal spatiality. We will also put on a larger retrospective film series at Louisiana with directors Bêka & Lemoine, who are 'regulars' at the festival.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of 1968, in the footsteps of the hippies and squatters and their experiments with community,

collectivity and sustainability, we have invited the Indian star architect Anupama Kundoo to curate a film program. She has titled her film selection 'Thinking Brick.' Kundoo is involved in Auroville, a Utopian collective in India that also celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. During the festival she will have a conversation with Jan Gehl about the legacy of 1968 as well as conduct workshops on user environment and social sustainability, among other events. She is slated to have a solo show at Louisiana in 2020

What are some other highlights from this year's program?

We have also invited designers and selected institutions to open the doors to their 'home,' to give a taste of the architecture of their site as well as share a peek of projects they currently have on the drawing board. Under the format 'Open House,' an exclusive window opens into these worlds that are otherwise closed to the public. The festival opens alongside the opening of BLOX, the new, prestigious, Realdaniafunded building on the Bryghus site that was designed by Rem Koolhaas' OMA office. The multifunctional building will house, among other organizations, the Danish Architecture Center, which opens on May 7 with the exhibition Welcome Home that deals with home and housing. With our cohesive themes, we have joined forces to make an interesting program in this new 'architectural temple.'

We have included many guided tours, because we can see from previous years that our audience is very interested in them - they are, in general, very committed to their city and its architecture. But of course, we also have more academic content, including several conferences and seminars along with some of our movie and debate events. This year, I am particularly looking forward to our cooperation with BL - Denmark's General Housing, with whom we will host both open air and private film screenings in social housing complexes which are often only known through the stories the media tells about them such as Gellerup, Mjølnerparken and Vollsmose, as well as a major Nordic conference on affordable housing. This year, we have many activities in social housing compounds, which many have never visited and know primarily from media coverage.

I'm also going to stop by the Danish Architecture Center in BLOX, where we have asked fashion researcher Ane Lynge-Jorlén to curate a smaller program about the body, fashion and architecture, and I'll attend as many lectures as I can with our guests such as Rafael Moneo, Brandlhuber + Roth, Urbanus, Niklas Maak, Kundoo & Gehl.

