



Foto: Malthe Ivarsson

## **New partnership ensures nine more years of the popular SMK Fridays art events**

**Since 2013, SMK Fridays has been a key social and experimental Friday highlight on the Copenhagen scene. Mixing art, talks, music and drinks, these events have created a different kind of after-hours museum experience at SMK – The National Gallery of Denmark. Now, a nine-year strategic partnership between SMK and the Bikuben Foundation paves the way for SMK Fridays setting all-new standards for communities with art at the centre.**

### **PRESS RELEASE**

After ten years, 58 fun-filled Fridays and almost 200,000 guests, the SMK Fridays events are firmly established as an integrated part of SMK. For seven Fridays each year, young and old alike have flocked to Denmark's national gallery to be part of this innovative Friday format, which explores new approaches to what a museum visit can be.

Previous events have included overnight stays at the museum, conversation salons, audio-only cinema experiences, intimate performances, sound healing, joint workshops, concerts set amidst art, art talks and expert insights. Always based on SMK's rich collection covering 700 years of art and on the current exhibitions, always springing from a desire to surprise, and always free.

## **A partnership focused on innovation**

The Bikuben Foundation has supported SMK Fridays throughout the years. Issuing a new grant, the foundation now enables the popular format to continue for another nine years. In a new departure, SMK and the Bikuben Foundation have entered a strategic partnership that will serve to further develop SMK Fridays and help support SMK's stated wish to be a meeting place for more – and more different – people. With this long-term partnership in place, the SMK Fridays events can explore even greater levels of ambition.

'The original dream behind SMK Fridays was to make SMK relevant to young people and to create a different and informal museum experience especially aimed at them. The young people came, but the format has proven attractive to guests of all ages. And that has sparked an even greater ambition in us: to make SMK Fridays relevant and topical to even more people – and more different people – in digital as well as physical communities, nationally and internationally,' says SMK's director, Mikkel Bogh, and continues:

'As Denmark's national gallery, we want to be a place that nurtures community and conversation, and we now have the opportunity to devote even more effort to doing exactly that. At the same time, we can let the experiences spread to the rest of the museum, making SMK Fridays an engine for learning for our entire organisation, for example as regards issues such as diversity and digital opportunities.'

## **Developing the organisation**

The new partnership will build on the learning accrued at SMK since 2013, which tells us that, it is possible to reframe museum visits and who the visitors are, but doing so requires long-term, persistent effort. You need time to experiment and test, because the format must be constantly reinvented and updated to ensure current relevance and topicality. The format must make sense to the museum's existing and potential guests in order to have an even larger and more diverse group of people participate and experience the importance of art.

'SMK Fridays has always been envisioned as a laboratory where experimenting, failing, testing and learning are core values. We are now entering an innovative development phase where SMK's potential can be further developed through a focus on diversity, the digital realm, international community and, not least, learning and knowledge sharing. With our strategic partnership, we make time, space and resources available for innovation processes, and it will also be possible for SMK to employ the specialists needed to break new ground,' says Søren Kaare-Andersen, CEO of the Bikuben Foundation.

The new grant period takes effect from August 2023, and the partnership is divided into three phases, each covering three years. The first grant is DKK 13 million.

## **The four focus areas of the partnership:**

### **Diversity**

SMK Fridays must reflect the overall demographic of Denmark, and everyone must feel welcome to take part in SMK's activities. The diversity effort will, among other things, be

based on lessons learnt and development work already done on a smaller scale at SMK in recent years, using elements such as outreach (both physical and digital), programming, partnerships and community building.

## **Digital effort**

In the future, SMK Fridays will value the digital community as highly as the physical one. This means that SMK Fridays will operate in the digital realm on an equal footing with the analogue and physical one – and in the long term, SMK Fridays will become a leading role model in the field, one that other art institutions in Denmark and abroad look to and learn from.

## **International effort**

International efforts will be a key part of SMK Fridays' endeavours, foundation and promise. SMK Fridays will move out into the world in connection with the museum's collaborations on exhibitions – and the whole world will move into SMK as part of SMK Fridays. In this way, SMK will become an international resource for rethinking communities with art at the centre.

## **Learning**

SMK Fridays will be an engine for learning, setting new standards for what it means to be a modern and learning organisation that is constantly developing its own practice. Reflecting this, SMK Fridays will be a point of reference for the entire SMK organisation within areas such as qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis as well as the application of new learning.

The next SMK Fridays event takes place on Friday 24 March, featuring concerts, talks, drinks, performances and readings. Find the program [here](#).

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Read more about the Bikuben Foundation's work with strategic partnerships [here](#).