

From: Apolonija Polona Sustersic
To: [Alle ansatte](#)
Cc: [Torben Lai](#); [Theodor Barth](#)
Subject: The Rector issue
Date: tirsdag 15. mai 2018 21.54.11

Dear Colleagues,

My apologies for writing this in English! However, I guess you all will be able to understand my writing more or less. I still didn't learn Norwegian (my contract is "only" for 6 years!). Honestly, I'm getting a bit tired of learning new languages every time when I move from one country to another: learning Slovenian as a child, Serbo-Croatian as teenager, to English, to Dutch to Italian, to German, to Swedish (which is not that good at all!). Most of the discussion about school politics is in Norwegian, of course, but that makes it difficult for us foreigners to understand what is really going on and follow and comment on your debate. (Maybe I should just speak for myself at this point!).

Well, I have to thank to Theo Barth to write "us – others" a letter in English and try to open the debate wider. I also have to thank to my colleagues Olga Schmedling and Unni Gjertsen who took time to explain me the whole issue.

In the following hopefully not too long letter I will try to explain to you my view and experience in relation to the question of the institutional leadership.

If I'm not mistaken, it has been in the 90' when the neoliberal politics starts to hit into the structure of the European public institutions. It has been that time that we start to experience the "divided" leadership in the art museums, "kunstallen", "kunstvereinen" and art academies (I'm relating my memory to the Netherlands and Germany at that time). As artists we have been protesting against it since art academies and other art boards of art institutions at once got a Director (a new pay role) parallel or "above" the Rector. The power has been divided! As the Rector, who would usually be an artist wasn't good enough to run "the business" of the institution. The new figure was appointed who would be from the business or the management, who would not know much about the contemporary art production or education.

Question: Who was the Rector of the previous Kunstakademiet at the time? Was it one or two people? When did the system change? Why?

Conclusion: when the power is divided into two (not equal) powers:

administrative/financial power AND academic/symbolic power; it is not really necessary that the two will go along or agree about the future of the institution or have a common vision. In fact, we have more cases when the two disagree. The Board should be in place to regulate the disagreement but... is this really happening?

When this power is in the hands of one person – a Rector (responsible to the Board); somebody who has a vision about the future of the institution and who knows how to implement it, somebody who share power with others – content providers, discuss and get opinion from her/his academic colleagues then there is more chance by definition to implement a change that would be supported by the majority. What do you think?

I hope what I'm writing here make sense to you, I hope I didn't miss the point too much!

Think more.

Good luck

Apolonija

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