

6 June 2005

Concerning the Nordic Council of Ministers' Structure Group's suggestions for structural reform for the Nordic cultural collaboration:

As a former artist-in-residence at NIFCA, Suomenlinna, Finland, under the 2004 Media Air programme, I am concerned to hear of the proposed restructuring of the Nordic cultural collaboration, and in particular of the threatened closure of NIFCA.

As a practitioner and as the codirector of an artist-run space, I am well aware of the struggle to maintain an independent, responsive and critical position (as an individual or group). The calculus of political expediency cannot be brought to bear on the nurturing and articulation of artists' voices. In the face of "globalisation" and the concomitant erosion of democratic possibilities, it is imperative to develop (all-too-rare) organisations such as NIFCA further – to maintain their fertilisation of and responsiveness to local (in time, in place) people and ideas and actions. To guide such development, it is necessary to have experts "on the ground" – not distant administrators.

The NIFCA residency gave me space and time to pursue my work with rigour, and allowed me to develop relationships with other arts organisations (Kiasma and Pixelache in Helsinki). I was impressed by the heterogeneity and vision of my co-residents on the programme. NIFCA's publications and events display clear commitment to a vision of diversity and exploration in arts practice, and I look forward to its continued presence.

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