

## Countdown begins to European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017

Daring and unforgettable, thought-provoking and creative, Aarhus 2017 has revealed a selection of highlights from its European Capital of Culture programme.

Under the headline theme 'Rethink', a kick-off event detailed some of the iconic performances and works of art planned for Aarhus 2017, exactly a year ahead of its official opening.

With a programme of events for people of all ages and from all walks of life, Denmark's second biggest city is sure to live up to the European Capital of Culture initiative's reputation for excellence.

"We'll be Capital of Culture for the whole of Europe in 2017, and we want to take people on a journey through Denmark's unparalleled cultural richness," says Rebecca Matthews, CEO of European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017.

"At the same time, Aarhus 2017 will provide a unique opportunity for us to engage with artists and creative entrepreneurs from across the globe."

### Highlights

The programme highlights announced by Aarhus 2017 include the following:

1. In a unique collaboration between the Royal Danish Theatre and Moesgaard Museum, a spectacular outdoor performance of Red Serpent ("Røde Orm") will be presented on and around the museum's grass-covered roof.

"We hope the audience will be excited by this captivating tale of a Viking hero," says Morten Hesseldahl, CEO of the Royal Danish Theatre. "It promises to be a riveting performance, and will showcase the talent of our great Danish actors."

2. Aarhus 2017 will also feature the acclaimed contemporary ballet Tree of Codes, an interpretation of Jonathan Safran Foer's book of the same name.

Dancers from The Paris Opera Ballet and Company Wayne McGregor will perform the ballet, which was created by three world-renowned artists: Danish visual artist Olafur Eliasson, British choreographer Wayne McGregor, and composer and musician Jamie xx.

"Despite working in different fields, the three of us quickly established a constructive dialogue. We had a common understanding of what we wanted to achieve. And it was fun, creating something together that has artistic depth, while being accessible to a wide audience," Olafur Eliasson explains about the artistic process.

3. During summer 2017, a giant international art project will take shape, stretching more than 4km from Aarhus city centre to the beach. Presented by ARoS Aarhus Art Museum, THE GARDEN – End of Times, Beginning of Times will examine the dramatic change in man and nature’s relationship over the past 400 years.

4. Danish Oscar award-winning film director Susanne Bier’s internationally-acclaimed movie trilogy will be transformed into three different art forms.

The National Danish Opera will “rethink” Brothers for the stage. Choreographer Palle Granhøj will turn Open Hearts into a ballet. And Aarhus Concert Hall and the Betty Nansen Theatre will collaborate on a musical dramatisation of After the Wedding, directed by renowned Danish stage director, Peter Langdal.

Susanne Bier is excited about this project: “I look very much forward to experience, how other artists are going to rethink and develop my work”, Susanne Bier says.

### **Game-changer**

European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017 will take art and culture to the people, with more than 350 projects in development across the city and the Central Denmark region.

Each month, the programme will feature flagship events, performances and/or exhibitions, but will also include dozens of smaller events and projects made by and for local communities.

“We’re developing a programme for the future,” says Aarhus 2017 CEO Rebecca Matthews. “For Aarhus and the surrounding region, next year will be a game-changer. Our year as European Capital of Culture will, we believe, be one of the most significant cultural and social events in Denmark for many years to come”.

Aarhus 2017 will present the full programme of events and activities for its year as European Capital of Culture on 12 October 2016.

### **Facts:**

**European Capital of Culture** is an international, cultural project that ranks among Europe's most ambitious. The idea is to show the richness and diversity of European culture, and to contribute to a greater mutual understanding between the citizens in Europe.

**Patronage:** Queen Margrethe II of Denmark as Royal Patron of the Capital of Culture.

**Official opening:** Aarhus, Denmark, Saturday 21 January 2017

**Website:** <http://www.aarhus2017.dk/en/>

## **Pictures**

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Rebecca Matthews picture (Photo: Michael Grøn, Billedmageren)

The Red Serpent scene at Moesgaard Museum (Photo: Montgomery Studio)

For more information:

### **Bent Sørensen**

Head of Communication

Aarhus 2017 European Capital of Culture

Tel: + 45 31478803

Email: [bent.sorensen@aarhus2017.dk](mailto:bent.sorensen@aarhus2017.dk)