

## **Electoral programme for Måns Wrangé (rector candidate) and Anne-Linn Akselsen (prorector candidate)**

### **A few introductory remarks**

KHiO is one of Northern Europe's leading art academies, with fantastic resources, highly qualified and competent co-workers, and, just as crucial, extremely engaged and talented students. This is also the reason we have humbly accepted our nomination as candidates for rector and prorector. It has been challenging for an external candidate and a candidate who is relatively new at KHiO to write a brief programme for such a complex institution as KHiO. We have therefore chosen not to address everything that is already working well at KHiO and instead try to identify a few challenges we believe are critical to KHiO's future development, and also provide a few examples of possible measures and strategies (with the caveat that certain proposals have already been realised or are being developed at KHiO, either centrally or at individual departments).

### **KHiO in society, society at KHiO**

KHiO is a venue for artistic education and research, and it is one of Norway's most important culture and knowledge institutions. It is a venue that combines both the teaching of various knowledge traditions and the production of new knowledge, with the creation and presentation of new art and culture. It is a laboratory where all conceivable aspects of human existence are explored with the means that are available today, from cutting-edge digital technology's immaterial processes to various corporeal forms of expression. KHiO is also a necessary platform for critical discussions of society's principal challenges, in a critical public sphere that is becoming ever smaller and with a medial and political landscape in flux, with increasing polarisation, hatred towards dissenters and threats to the freedom of expression. KHiO needs to be active in the public debate and in the efforts to counter discrimination and increasing differences. An up-to-date art education must encompass questions of sustainability, climate change and the refugee crisis.

### **Education – autonomy and collaboration, specialisation and interdisciplinary work**

In today's art and culture, the borders between various artforms are being crossed more and more, a development that is also reflected at KHiO. A prioritised topic for us is to increase the interdisciplinary collaboration between the various departments, something that as yet has not taken place to a large extent. There is an enormous potential in these possibilities, both for students and staff. Such interdisciplinarity can engender artistic development and also make the use of resources more efficient and thereby liberate more resources for teaching. Such collaboration can however not be ordered from above, but must be both wanted (as based on interest) and initiated by academic staff and students. Collaboration between various departments with various structures, plans and curricula is, however, not uncomplicated, and incentives, processes and structures for interdisciplinary collaborations, courses and projects must therefore be developed. For example, extra resources can be allocated for just such a purpose. This should be thoroughly analysed in order to define where the various departments and programmes will benefit from shared structures and topics, and then give the departments as much autonomy as possible.

It is, furthermore, essential to create a common identity and a sense of community for students and staff at KHiO that extends beyond statements in public strategy documents. Only interpersonal meetings can achieve this, and further shared meeting places and social opportunities should be created. One suggestion is to organise a debate evening with invited debaters once a month, followed by a bar where current issues and interdisciplinary topics are discussed.

### **Artistic research and research**

It is very positive that KHiO has been accredited as a specialised university institution with a profile within the arts. The PhD programme is currently underfunded, however, something that has stirred fear that there will be further departmental budget cuts that may impact the BA and MA programmes. In addition to having to ensure the funding of the PhD programme in budget negotiations with the Ministry of Education, an offensive and long-term strategy and action plan for applying for external research funding must be developed with both administrative and academic support for project

applications. Opportunities for interdisciplinary PhD collaboration with other university colleges and universities should also be explored.

The PhD programme at KHiO will be interdisciplinary, but experiences from similar PhD programmes in the Nordic countries also highlight the need for in-depth, discipline-specific topical seminars that can be set up in collaboration with art educations in Norway, the Nordic countries and Europe (as has already been done at KHiO, e.g. at the Academy of Fine Art). The PhD programme should also be linked to the MA and BA programmes, by PhD students teaching a few classes and also presenting their research, and by having some research seminars and lectures open to all students.

### **Decision-making processes, co-determination and democracy**

In the Nordic countries and in large parts of the rest of the world, universities and university colleges are trending towards being governed in the same hierarchical “top-down” way as companies, through the so-called New Public Management ideology. We want instead to defend, strengthen and continue to develop the collegial form of governance where students and their education are the focal point of all decisions and priorities. This means that decisions about education and research should be made by student and academic staff representatives in various democratic bodies. In the same way we want to avoid “micromanagement” where leaders steer the activities down to the finest details. We believe instead in trusting departments and staff giving them as much independence as possible, something that will also encourage involvement and initiative.

The Student Council must be supported and developed, the students must be involved in all decision-making processes that affect their studies, and structures to encourage the students’ own educational initiatives must be implemented. For example, the rector/prorector should hold continual meetings with the Student Council, where student representatives can submit current issues and questions that should be addressed at KHiO’s board meetings and other key committees.

Meetings should be made more effective by planning such meetings far in advance and appointing permanent work groups and advisory committees where cases can be treated continuously. For example, some staff and students note that there are too many ad hoc meetings in temporary working groups, something that takes up too much time and makes it harder to participate in the democratic processes. Likewise, structures should be established to make decision-making processes quicker and more transparent, with continuously updated information about how a case is being processed. The division of responsibility should also be clarified between the various departments and KHiO as a whole, as well as between administration, technical staff and academic staff.

At an academy of art of KHiO’s size, it is easy for leadership to lose contact with the daily activities. Therefore, the rector and prorector should continuously be present at departments, workshops, exhibitions and performances in order to meet and discuss things with students and staff.

### **Equality, diversity and anti-discrimination**

Today, all higher education programmes have guidelines for equality, diversity and equal treatment and opportunities. In many cases, these issues are treated exclusively as a question of statistics, when a fairness perspective should in reality permeate the entire institution. In particular the MeToo movement has shown that this must continuously be placed at the top of the agenda, with specific measures and preventive work, instead of in generally formulated policy documents. KHiO has expended a good deal of time and effort in finding solutions to these problems the past year, but some work remains to be done. Here are a few proposals:

- Hire an equality secretary with a mandate to act as a student ombudsman and expert in equality, diversity, student rights and psychosocial work environment problems, and to receive reports and coordinate investigations into bullying, the abuse of power and sexual harassment. This service can be shared with similar institutions in Oslo, such as the Norwegian Academy of Music and the Oslo School of Architecture and Design.
- Appoint an equality and diversity committee that comprises staff and student representatives and is administered by the equality secretary.
- Continuous training of staff and courses for first-year students in norm criticism, ethics, gender-aware pedagogy, student rights and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act apply for their position, after a public announcement of the position, in order to prolong it by

another term. This system creates uncertainty among staff and risks reducing their long-term engagement in teaching. At worst, this may lead to a culture of silence where staff do not dare express critical opinions. In addition, this hiring process is highly resource-intensive and causes additional work for staff and students. We want therefore to discuss the possibility of removing the requirement for a public announcement of fixed-term positions that may be prolonged, and instead carry out an internal evaluation, also involving students, before the term is renewed. This is common at many other art educations in the Nordic countries. However, the public elections of the rector and prorector should follow the same practice as today.

### **Student recruitment**

At many university educations and in most art educations both in the Nordic countries and in the rest of the world, students are predominantly from an ethnic and socially homogeneous group. This unbalanced recruitment is problematic, not just from a rights and democracy perspective (given that the programmes are publicly funded and provide access to public platforms) but also in regard to artistic quality (if not all social groups are given access to higher education). This requires both a non-discriminatory application process and increased outreach activities, with for example student ambassadors and collaboration with upper secondary schools and preparatory programmes, as well as a digital open house as a supplement to the Open House initiative. In general, earmarked resources should be allocated for recruitment, and preliminary studies should be carried out to find effective methods and approaches.

### **International commitment**

The art and culture worlds are becoming ever more internationalised. Currently, KHiO is relatively little involved in exchange programmes with schools abroad, something that is a pity, because studies at art educations in another country can introduce students to new experiences, contacts and networks. Whether an exchange is successful or not depends largely on which institution the student has arrived at. It is therefore important that KHiO expands its network and affiliates itself with the most interesting artistic educations in culturally dynamic cities and regions, including outside of Europe.

Because of budget cuts at KHiO, there are only limited opportunities to invite guest teachers and lecturers from abroad. Several departments have requested a guest teacher flat, and KHiO should also be able to explore the possibility for sponsorship deals with hotel chains, and implement long-term partnerships with art and culture institutions that have international residencies and exhibitions.

### **Economy: develop instead of discontinue**

In 2018, KHiO had a negative operating result of NOK 7.777 million, an increase of NOK 1.205 million from 2017. For 2019, this has resulted in a 10% cut for all of KHiO's departments, something that at worst will negatively impact the students' education and the staff's working conditions. Instead of continuously cutting back on its activities, KHiO as an institution should create an offensive and long-term strategy and action plan increasing its revenue. Some proposals that can be discussed:

- External funds: A thorough analysis of available funds in Norway, the Nordic countries and Europe can be published on the intranet. An application consultant can be hired with extensive experience with applications for research grants, the EU etc., in order to support the staff and acquire funds for writing applications.
- Partnership with companies: A partnership deal can be signed with companies for very expensive equipment, such as large-scale 3D printouts, large-format printouts, casting of large-scale sculptures, robotics etc.
- Commissioned teaching: Commissioned courses can be held for companies and other university colleges, at times that do not disturb the students' access to the workshops, such as for example vacations, evenings and weekends. Staff will receive extra pay for holding these courses, and some of the profit will be allocated to their workshop or teaching.
- Collaboration with other university colleges and universities: By teaming up with other university colleges and universities, the costs of organising courses can be reduced.

- Renting out KHiO's premises: Seminar rooms, auditoriums, the canteen and other spaces can for example be rented out at times when they are not used for teaching, that is during weekends, vacations and evenings when no teaching activities are scheduled.
- Fundraising: Create a fundraising strategy and action plan in order to obtain funds for international guest teachers, major public presentations and exhibitions of student works, and stipends for students and study trips.