

With congratulations and best wishes for WTD, ASSITEJ Serbia contributes the message that Dalija Aćin Thelander, a member of our national centre, was asked to write this year.



Art must be in harmony with child's nature

Having dedicated my work to exploring and creating within the field of performance art for the very youngest, babies aged 0-18 months, I've learned that the usual theatrical conventions are not in accordance with babies' nature and needs. With no inhibitions, still beyond reach of social norms and limitations, regardless of where in the world they find themselves and where they come from, same wherever they are, babies enjoy some of the most beautiful and most important aspects of human nature – impulsiveness, tireless exploration and curiosity, enthusiasm and fascination with what's out of the ordinary. I'd realised that I had to start anew, questioning formats, moving boundaries and creating conditions fundamental for their nature – the nature of a child.

Broader field of the arts has long been experiencing massive changes, sacralised artist is a thing of the past. Art can and must offer alternatives, rather than reproduce restrictive social models. Questioning art made for children must be viewed through the prism of the marvellous nature of a child.

Art must be in harmony with child's nature, artist must learn all over again, from the child and with the child, in order for children and grown ups to become partners in learning, fantasy, gaining experiences and creating a better future.

Parents – experience theatre and art together with your child. Take your children to the theatre, and then allow your child to take you, and us, to new experiences.

Dalija Aćin Thelander is a Stockholm-based choreographer and cultural worker.

The focus of her years-long artistic exploration and creative work is performance art for babies.

Her work for the youngest audiences is oriented towards exploring choreographic practices focusing on increased immediacy and stimulation of audience, with the goal of multi-modal and affective experience. She is interested in exploring the synergy of choreography and installation art and their capacities for activating audience. Her performances enable the youngest audiences to experience performance art from a multi-faceted perspective, through kinaesthetic and all other senses. She sees spectators as co-creators of events and their experiences and reactions are thus a part of the aesthetics of the performance itself.

