

# H.C. Andersen and Community

An interdisciplinary conference

December 4th-7th 2017

## *Call for papers*

Hans Christian Andersen is an author with a unique connective power. His fairy tales are loved and have made an impact across cultures around the world. He can bring people together, locally, nationally and internationally. He has, like no other author, the potential to unite a global community. The Hans Christian Andersen Centre and the City of Odense would like to celebrate this by hosting this international conference on the topic of **Andersen and community**. The conference will take place around the 150th anniversary of the day Andersen was made Honorary Citizen of his native town, Odense.

The theme of community has never been of a more vital significance than at the present time. The process we refer to as modernity has been synonymous with fragmentation and disintegration of all kinds of traditional communities. Today, we might be facing the culmination of this process. Inequality is on the rise. The spectres of nationalism are undermining various international communities. If people unite it is too often in the mistrust and sometimes hatred of other people.

Hans Christian Andersen lived at a time when this process was at its early stages. And he was acutely aware of its potential perils. Thus, the theme of community is a major one of his fairy tales and stories; often in ways which have to do with struggles for recognition in a social arena. You find many tales and stories about communities which are based on acts of exclusion. You might say that Andersen, by highlighting the dynamics of social exclusion, established a secret community of the desolate, the lonely and the marginalised.

Alongside the transformations of traditional communities, other communities seem to appear. Heritage is on political agendas, on research desks and in school curricula as never before, centred on the question of how we can make sense of ourselves in this new world. Across borders, an important part of cultural heritage is the literary canon, and as the battles of modernity are fought on one level, the gatherings around literature unfold on other levels. In these culturally specific communities, Hans Christian Andersen is a key figure, as his literary and cultural legacy has a magnetic effect on people around the globe.

Centred on this theme of community, we invite papers that address all themes relevant to this subject, such as:

- Andersen's own thematizations of community
- Suggestions as to how Andersen can help us rethink the notion of community
- Reflections on how Andersen's legacy can assist in the formation of genuine communities, locally, nationally and internationally
- Andersen's cultural significance as the content of and function as cultural heritage and/or cultural icon

At the conference, the papers will be thematically organized in panel sessions which cover the following areas:

- Literature and literary studies
- Ethics and Philosophy
- Translation studies and Reception history
- Cultural studies and Heritage studies

Proposals for papers (see the invitation for guidelines) should be submitted to Anya Aarenstrup (anaa@sdu.dk).