

MANUFACTURE COPENHAGEN

Exploring challenges and opportunities for local production.

"We're at a very interesting place. I don't think I could have done this before 2012. We make changes locally, globally." (Bob Bland, CEO and Founder Manufacture New York)

With the kind support of MISTRA Future Fashion (MFF), MFF Project 1 and the Copenhagen School of Design and Technology (KEA) this week hosted a roundtable discussion and a workshop respectively. The aim of both events was to discuss challenges, opportunities, and next steps in relation to the establishment of local production in Copenhagen and/or Scandinavia, building on the model of Manufacture New York (MNY). MNY is a hybrid fashion incubator and factory located in Brooklyn, New York, established in 2012. Bob Bland, CEO and Founder of MNY, and Amanda Parkes, Co-Founder MNY, co-hosted the roundtable and workshop, to share their experiences and support us in the process of setting up Manufacture Copenhagen.

While there are many challenges to insourcing, i.e. the cost of labor in Denmark and Scandinavia, there are also many opportunities and an increasing interest amongst designers and brands in exploring models for local production. Likewise, local production is on the political agenda, both at the national and the regional level.

The roundtable meeting took place at KEA on Thursday, October 18th. Amongst the participants were representatives from KEA, Innonet Lifestyle, experienced entrepreneurs, and CBS/MFF. Following a presentation by CEO and Founder Bob Bland, we discussed similarities and differences between the textile and garment industry in Denmark and the US and what urban manufacturing could look like in Copenhagen. Based on Bob Bland and Amanda Parkes'

extensive experience in the textile and garment industry and setting up MNY, the discussion both concerned the vision and hands on questions in terms of what is needed to set up local production. Bob Bland and Amanda Parkes emphasized that public-private partnerships and inclusiveness are key.

The workshop took place the following day, also at KEA. We had about 60 participants, amongst whom were designers, seamstresses, students, lecturers, interaction designers, entrepreneurs, and researchers. Some of the participants came from Norway to join the discussion. Bob Bland and Amanda Parkes kicked off the workshop with a presentation, which was followed by a Q&A session. Then the workshop participants divided into groups to discuss Manufacture Copenhagen, including visions and how to set it up. Bob Bland and Amanda Parkes highlighted the importance of inclusivity and keeping the process open. We asked all participants to write their name and contact details on a card, as well as with what they could contribute to Manufacture Copenhagen. In this way we now have a better overview of the individual interests and areas of expertise of the community. After the brainstorm session each group did a small presentation, the discussion facilitated by Bob Bland and Amanda Parkes. Amongst the challenges put on the table were the current lack of skills, salaries, price points, as well as the current focus on “computer” skills in the educational system, as opposed to “hands on” skills. The participants however, also saw many opportunities, i.e. the creation of new jobs, re-thinking current business models, repair, the use of new technologies in production, and innovation. We ended the workshop with a networking session during which the participants eagerly discussed next steps and expressed their support and interest in Manufacture Copenhagen.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like further information about the workshop and/or a copy of notes. We are also very happy to add you to the Manufacture Copenhagen email list for updates and future events.

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