

**Kallenbach Ulla**

**The ethics of spectating and imagining**

**standard lecture**

This paper will discuss the ethics of imagination, performance and spectatorship. Since Plato's denunciation of imagination and mimesis in *The Republic* and Aristotle's judgment in *De Anima* that 'imaginings are for the most part false', imagination and its relation to performance and spectatorship has been controversial. Hence, studying imagination is not merely an issue of cognition or aesthetics, but as much a question of ethics. Critical issues have thus continually been the questions of how theatrical performance *acts on* the imagination of the spectator – and what *actions of* the spectator's imagination might be stimulated in return. Such issues are still pertinent, both in contemporary performances that set out to blur the boundaries between reality and fiction, and in cultural theory, philosophy and even neuroscience, where recent studies of imagination similarly have pointed to a blurring, or a conflux, of imagination and perception.

**Bio:**

Ulla Kallenbach is a postdoctoral researcher at the Department for the Study of Culture, University of Southern Denmark, working on her research project 'Imagining Imagination in Philosophy and Drama 1960-', funded by the Carlsberg Foundation. She completed her Ph.D. in 2014 with the thesis 'The Theatre of Imagining: Imagination in the Mind – Imagination on the Stage', which presented a cultural history of imagination and dramaturgy in the early - to late modern period. She has co-edited the journal *Nordic Theatre Studies* (2013-15) and recently published the anthology *stage/page/play: Interdisciplinary approaches to theatre and theatricality* (with Anna Lawaetz, Multivers Academic, 2016).

