

Kuratorernes note

Curators' Note

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Al Hansen (1927–1995) og Arthur Køpcke (1928–1977) delte samtid, kolleger og tidsånd. Som amerikaner og tysker bragte de internationale strømninger til Danmark på tidspunkter, hvor der for den danske kunstscene var langt til metropolerne i Europa og USA, både fysisk og mentalt. Alligevel lykkedes det dem at finde mindre platforme for udfoldelse i Danmark – godt hjulpet af enkelte danske kunstnere og projektmagere. Fælles for dem var en vitalisme i form af nytænkning og ukonventionel tilgang til verden. Begge udæskede de den nationale kunstscene og bragte verden udenfor ind.

Netværket omkring 60'ernes fluxus-bevægelse, Hansen og Køpcke inklusive, fremtvang et særlig uprætentiøst og løssluppet forhold til publikum. Med værker og aktioner, der naturligt inddrog beskuerens deltagelse og aktive medskaben, nedfældede kunstnerne gedigent grundstenen til vores samtidskunsts tværmediale værker såvel som interventioner, performances og socialt design.

Hansen og Køpcke optrådte i 1970 sammen under en fluxus-festival, arrangeret af René Block i Berlin. Men udover berøringsflader gennem fluxus-aktiviteter har de flere fællestræk. De skabte collager, assemblager og happenings, hvor materialet ofte var affald og andre efterladenskaber. De lod kunst og levet liv falde sammen og værk og praksis blive ét.

'Action and Remains' er dobbeltudstillingens titel. 'Action' fordi aktioner, performances, aktiv deltagelse, og bestræbelsen på at invitere beskueren til udvidelse af værket er at finde i kernen af begge kunstnerskaber. 'Remains' fordi det, vi har tilbage, er efterladenskaber af disse beretninger, historier og til tider absurde fortællinger.

Trods de mange sammenfald og krydsende spor forbliver deres værker forskellige og det kræver derfor en kort introduktion til dem hver især for med retfærdighed at formidle deres praksisser:

Al Hansen (1927–1995) and Arthur Køpcke (1928–1977) shared era, colleagues and zeitgeist. As an American and a German, they brought international currents to Denmark at a time when the Danish art scene felt far removed, both physically and mentally, from the metropolises in Europe and the US. Still they were able to find a modest platform for their activities in Denmark, considerably aided by individual Danish artists and entrepreneurs. They were both vital in their innovation and unorthodox approaches to the world. They provoked the national art scene and brought in the outside world.

The network around the 1960s Fluxus movement, including Hansen and Køpcke, prompted a particularly unpretentious and casual relationship with the audience. With works and actions that naturally involved audience participation and even co-creation, the artists definitively supplied the bedrock of our contemporary art's cross-medial works as well as interventions, performances and social design.

In 1970 Hansen and Køpcke performed together at a Fluxus festival arranged by René Block in Berlin. But in addition to taking part in some of the same Fluxus activities, they have several traits in common: they created collages, assemblages and happenings whose material often comprised rubbish and other remains; they let art and lived life merge, and work and practice become one.

'Action and Remains' is the title of the double exhibition. 'Action' because actions, performances, active participation and the endeavour to invite the viewer to expand the work are at the heart of both oeuvres. 'Remains' because what is left are the remains of these accounts, stories and at times absurd narratives.

Despite the many synchronicities and crossing paths, their works remain different and a short introduction to each of them is therefore necessary to properly explain their practices:

Al Hansen

Al Hansen havde sit primære virke i New York, men opholdte sig også i længere perioder i Danmark, Holland og Tyskland. Som person var han en vigtig figur i fluxus-netværket, idet han om nogen opløste grænsen mellem det liv han levede, og den kunst han skabte. Hansen VAR fluxus – altid på vej og altid med materialerne til værkerne ved hånden – eller i de medfølgende plasticposer. Som en nomade, der aldrig boede ret lang tid det samme sted, skabte han værker som var – og er – et humoristisk og intelligent konglomerat af neo-dada, fluxus og popkunst.

I 1957 udstillede Hansen første gang med Robert Rauschenberg, Jim Dine, Claes Oldenburg og Allan Kaprow. Disse kunstnere var også med i scenen omkring kunstneren John Cage og hans undervisning på New School of Social Research i New York, som blev et stærkt udgangspunkt for Hansens værkpraksis. Siden skulle han finde sine nærmeste åndsfæller blandt hovedfigurerne Alison Knowles, Dick Higgins, Benjamin Patterson, George Brecht, Meredith Monk, Emmet Williams, Wolf Vostell, Eric Andersen, Nam June Paik m. fl.

Gennem hele hans værk er kvinden som figur et gennemløbende spor. Denne vedholdenhed blev omsat til de nu næsten ikoniske Venus-collager hvor Hansen brugte dagligdagsmaterialer så som cigaretter og cigaret-papir og praktiserede en slags visuel poesi ved brug og genbrug af sprogfragmenter fra papiret til chokoladen Hershey bar.

Udstillingen omfatter væsentlige af disse Venus-collager, assemblager af cigaret-skodder og andet til-overs-blevent fra hverdagen samt eksempler i film og lyd på hans mange happenings. For Al Hansen var collagen og happeningen to sammenhængende medier med samme procesforløb. Eller som han udtrykker det i sin centrale tekst om happeningen, *A Primer of Happenings & Time/Space Art* fra 1965: „one puts parts together in the manner of making a collage“. Der vises også eksempler på kunstnerens mere perifere værker såsom arkitektur-scenarier og tegninger af kollegerne fra kunstmiljøet.

Udstillingen er koncentreret om de værker han 'efterlod' i Danmark, suppleret med værker fra to centrale samlinger i henholdsvis New York og Berlin.

Al Hansen

Al Hansen worked primarily in New York but spent long periods of his life in Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany. Personally a seminal figure in the Fluxus network, he if any dissolved the boundaries between the life he led and the art he created. Hansen WAS Fluxus – always on the move and always with the materials for his works at hand – or in the ever-present plastic bags. Like a nomad, never staying for very long time in the same place, he created works that were – and are – a humorous and intelligent conglomerate of neo-Dada, Fluxus and pop art.

In 1957 Hansen exhibited for the first time with Robert Rauschenberg, Jim Dine, Claes Oldenburg and Allan Kaprow. These artists also belonged to the scene around the artist John Cage and his teaching at the New School of Social Research in New York which would become a strong foundation for Hansen's practice. He was subsequently to find his kindred spirits among the key figures Alison Knowles, Dick Higgins, Benjamin Patterson, George Brecht, Meredith Monk, Emmet Williams, Wolf Vostell, Eric Andersen, Nam June Paik and others.

Throughout his production the woman as a figure is a recurrent trait. This persistence took the form of the now almost iconic Venus collages in which Hansen employed everyday materials such as cigarettes and cigarette paper and practised a sort of visual poetry by using and reusing linguistic fragments from Hershey bar wrappers.

The exhibition comprises essential Venus collages, assemblages of cigarette butts and other everyday flotsam as well as film and sound examples of his many happenings. To Al Hansen the collage and the happening were two interwoven media that took a similar course. Or as he puts it in his 1965 key text on the happening, *A Primer of Happenings & Time/Space Art*: "one puts parts together in the manner of making a collage." On display too are examples of the artist's more peripheral works such as architectural scenarios and drawings of his colleagues from the art milieu.

The exhibition is concentrated on the works he 'left' in Denmark, supplemented by works from two pivotal collections in New York and Berlin.

Arthur K pcke

Arthur K pcke kom til Danmark i 1958 og Galerie K pcke blev – n ret af hans radikale nyt nkning og udfarende energi – centrum for europ isk avantgarde midt i K benhavn gennem godt fem  r fra 1958 til 1963. Her kom blandt andre Robert Filliou, Diter Rot, Jean Tinguely, Daniel Spoerri og Piero Manzoni. Fra den hjemlige kunstscene kom Albert Mertz, Gunnar Aagaard Andersen, Preben Hornung m.fl. Der blev vist en imponerede r kke af udstillinger, men galleriets store betydning skyldtes ogs , at det fungerede som forum for udveksling af id er og synspunkter om kunsten.

Hvad der st r tilbage af K pckes mange initiativer er en vildtvoksende mangfoldighed af v rker fra 1940'erne og frem til 1976. Midt i mylderet af disse 'remains' udkrystalliserer sig et s regent v rk, som af K pckes samtidige ven og kunstnerkollega Tomas Schmit betegnes som det mest betydningsfulde kunstv rk i det 20.  rhundrede. V rket *reading/work-pieces* best r af 129 stykker (pieces) eller anvisninger p  kunstv rker, aktioner eller oplevelser, man selv kan sammenstykke. Tanken er, at alle kan realisere hans id er. Hans v rker (realizations) efter 1963 er if lge seniorforsker og museumsinspekt r, Susanne Rennert, realiseringer af dette massive id ekatalog.

Gennem aktiv tilegnelse af K pckes opfordringer og udfordringer bliver den, der ser, forvandlet fra fordringsl s tilskuer til aktiv deltager. K pckes sigte er klart og didaktisk: Beskueren skal gennem sin aktive tilegnelse af v rket opleve d t at begribe, forst  og indse – eller beskrevet med hans eget credo, *begreifen erleben*.

Som en rebus refererer de mange tal, der optr der i K pckes billeder direkte til numrene i hans *reading/work-pieces*, og dermed inviteres beskueren til at afkode billedernes skjulte betydning. P  denne m de har K pcke skabt en slags udvidede v rker, der reaktiveres, hver gang de oplevs og forst s af en beskuer.

Id erne i *reading/work-pieces* er udviklet fra ca. 1950–56 sammen med den tyske kunstner Egon-Karl Nicolaus. I 1958–64 udvikler K pcke disse yderligere og i 1972 udgives de i samlet form af Ren  Block.

Udstillingen best r af v rker fra mere end fyrrer samlere og seks institutioner fra Danmark og Tyskland.

Arthur K pcke

Arthur K pcke came to Denmark in 1958 and Galerie K pcke – nourished by his radical innovation and driving force – became the centre of European avant-garde in the middle of Copenhagen for about half a decade, 1958 to 1963. Among others came Robert Filliou, Diter Rot, Jean Tinguely, Daniel Spoerri and Piero Manzoni, and from the domestic art scene Albert Mertz, Gunnar Aagaard Andersen, Preben Hornung and others. An impressive array of exhibitions was presented but the gallery's great importance was also due to the fact that it functioned as a forum for the exchange of ideas and views on art.

What is left of K pcke's many initiatives is a burgeoning multiplicity of works from the 1940s until 1976. From the frenzy of these 'remains' crystallises a singular work which K pcke's friend and artist colleague Tomas Schmit termed the most significant artwork of the twentieth century. The work *reading/work-pieces* comprises 129 pieces or directions for artworks, actions or experiences for the viewer to piece together him- or herself, the idea being that everybody can realise his ideas. His works (realisations) since 1963, according to senior research associate and museum director Susanne Rennert, are realisations of this massive catalogue of ideas.

Through active acquisition of K pcke's suggestions and challenges, whoever sees them is transformed from an unassuming viewer to an active participant. K pcke's aim is manifest and didactic: through active acquisition of the work the viewer is to experience the recognition, realisation, understanding – or in the words of his own credo, *begreifen erleben*.

Like a rebus, the many numbers featured in K pcke's pictures refer directly to the numbers in his *reading/work-pieces*, and thus the viewer is invited to decode the hidden meaning of the pictures. In this way K pcke has created a form of expanded works which are reactivated each time they are experienced and understood by a viewer.

The ideas in *reading/work-pieces* were developed ca. 1950–56 with the German artist Egon-Karl Nicolaus. 1958–64 K pcke further developed them and in 1972 they were published in collected form by Ren  Block.

The exhibition comprises works from more than forty collectors and six institutions in Denmark and Germany.

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