

Charlottenborg

PRESS RELEASE

1 September 2011

Simon Starling

South Galleries

7 October 2011 – 22 January 2012

Vernissage: 6 October, 19-22.00

This exhibition features two major works by Simon Starling (born in England in 1967, based in Copenhagen). Starling is one of the most significant European artists of his generation, and a master story-teller of a very contemporary kind. The jurors who awarded Starling the Turner Prize in 2005 singled out his “unique ability to create poetics, drawing together a wide range of cultural, political and historical narratives.”

Both of the major works in the exhibition explore the notion of performance and one – which has been newly commissioned by Charlottenborg – involves a very special puppet play. The latter is a piece of theatre, *The Expedition* (2011), written by the artist and staged with the help of people from the Marionet Teatret in Copenhagen’s ‘Kings Garden’. To stage the performance Starling has built a replica of the marionette theatre and ‘teleported’ it into Charlottenborg. *The Expedition* is the latest in a group of works in which Starling has transplanted buildings and environments in order to play with space and time. It also reflects the artist’s interest in re-presenting and transforming his own works, and acts as a kind of miniature retrospective – but one that is subject to hilarious distortions, and which is also highly suitable for children. For more details see next page.

The exhibition also features an installation, *Project for a Masquerade (Hiroshima)* (2010-11), which centres on a group of carved Japanese Noh masks that represent the characters in a play. The scenario is based on an ancient Japanese story, *Eboshi-ori*, but Starling has peopled this tale with figures from a Cold War saga based around the British sculptor Henry Moore and his real and fictional contemporaries – including art collectors, historians and spies. The piece invokes the story of a sculpture, *Nuclear Energy* (1963–65), that Moore was commissioned to make in Chicago to mark the site of some of the earliest nuclear experiments. The commission was beset by political pressure – Moore even agreed to change its title – and when later another version of the sculpture found a home in Hiroshima it attracted its own controversies.

Starling’s installation weaves together the stories of Moore’s sculpture, and of this curious meeting of English, American and Japanese cultures. The group of masks faces a mirrored screen – evoking the ‘mirror room’, the dressing room in which Noh actors ritually assume their characters. On the reverse of this screen a film is projected that documents the making of the masks by a Japanese craftsman, interwoven with the stories of *Eboshi-ori* and of Moore’s monument. All of the elements in this complex work demonstrate Starling’s interest in the notion of shifting identities and material transformation, and reflect his sense of the inter-connectedness of past and present, and of the links that characterise our globalised world.

The exhibition is curated by Mark Sladen, Charlottenborg’s director. It is supported by The Danish Arts Council (Committee for Visual Arts), Grosserer L.F. Foghts Fond and Neugerriemschneider (Berlin). Additional thanks to the National Workshops for Arts and Crafts (Copenhagen) and the Rennie Collection (Vancouver).

Puppet theatre performances

The Expedition follows a hapless adventurer as he attempts to get to New York by boat, a journey that is beset by calamities, and on which he meets a variety of characters such as an elusive zebra-striped beast and a sinister submarine. The work is based on four of Starling’s previous pieces – each of which involve

building, demolishing and sailing in boats – and which are here combined into a single slapstick narrative complete with a puppet version of the artist.

The play is 25 minutes long, and is suitable for children of three years and up. Admission for children under 16 is free. Adults accompanying children are admitted free (other adults pay standard Charlottenborg admission price: 60 kr / 40 kr concessions). No booking is required.

Performances are at 14.00 every Sunday afternoon from 16 October 2011 to 15 January 2012 (Not including 25 Dec and 1 Jan 2012; and please note that on Sunday 22 January the performance is at 17.00).

In addition there are special performances as follows:

- Open rehearsals: Sunday 9 October (14:00), Friday 14 October (18:30 and 20:00, Culture Night)
- Friday 21 October (14:00, school holiday performance)
- Special performances for schools (fully booked)

Events

Kunst Kino: Simon Starling presents...

Onsdag / Wednesday 2.11, 17.00

Film is a central element in Simon Starling's art, and features prominently in his exhibition at Charlottenborg. For tonight's Kunst Kino the artist introduces *A Question of Attribution* (1992) – a play by Alan Bennett about the English art historian and spy Sir Anthony Blunt, who also appears in Starling's *Project for a Masquerade* – as well as showing clips from his own works.

Puppet theatre talk

Wednesday 11.01.12, 19.00. Salon / Admission free.

Starling's *The Expedition* has been directed for the stage by Edward Lloyd Pierce, an American director and scenographer who is based in Copenhagen. Pierce has worked for many different companies in Denmark and abroad, and also has his own performance group, Krash Kompagni. For this evening's event Starling and Pierce are in conversation, discussing Starling's puppet play and its relation to his practice and to wider notions of theatre.

Sunday guided tours

There are guided tours of the exhibitions on various Sundays. The tours start at 13.00 and are led by young art historians. Tours are in Danish, and admission is included in the exhibition ticket. Tours are happening on 9 and 23 October, 20 November and 11 December.

Puppet theatre collaborators

Artist: Simon Starling

Theatre director: Edward Lloyd Pierce

Scenographer and puppet maker: Paul Arne Kring

Composer: Ole Højer Hansen

Puppeteers / actors: Peder Holm Johansen and Anya Sass

Coordinator at Charlottenborg: Liberty Paterson

Special thanks to: Jan Bleichner, Jan Dunkel, Uffe Holm, Maja McLaughlin, Carl Press, Marianne Tuxen, Annette Ueberlein and Lejf Nørst

Artist's biography

Born in Epsom, England, in 1967, Starling earned a degree in photography at Nottingham Polytechnic in 1990, and finished his studies in 1992 at the Glasgow School of Art. He had his first solo exhibition in 1995, and since then he has had more than 50 solo shows, including exhibitions at Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel (2005), The Power Plant, Toronto (2008), and Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima (2010). His recent group projects include *Reality Check*, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen (2008), *Altermodern*, Tate Modern (2009) and *Making Worlds*, 53rd Venice Biennale, Venice (2009).

Press

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Press photos download: www.kunsthalcharlottenborg.dk

Opening hours and exhibition tickets

Tuesday to Sunday 11-17.00 (Wednesday 11-20.00)

Adults 60 kr. Students, seniors and groups 40 kr. Children under 16 free. Free admission after 17.00 on Wednesdays.

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