

HUMMINGS

An Exhibition of Contingencies and Entanglements in the city of Køge

KØS Museum of Art in Public Spaces

14 August – 26 September 2021, Køge / DK

Does the stone feel sorrow? Do they hum?¹

They do in Olga Ravn's novel *The Employees*, written in reference to Lea Guldditte Hestelund's community of stone sculptures². Certainly, humming also refers to a wide range of phenomena: from the noise produced by machines to the sound created by gas piping through the tectonic layers of the Earth or to the sound of the mating call of a male midshipman fish in the ocean. No matter what, it offers us to take a chance to imagine a language connecting all beings, animate or inanimate.

Indicating indistinctive sounds and expressions referring to a pre-language state, which we cannot define and understand clearly, humming can be considered as a common thread between human beings and "other-than-human-persons"³, thus, can serve as a beginning to think over the interspecies relationship: how the existence and survival of all beings, all life forms are interconnected with each other and mutually dependent. With this title, it is aimed to dislocate the human-centred perspective to open up a space for listening to the hummings from a future, where the dichotomy between the human and non-human is reconciled.

Hummings is about plurality of voices; a metaphorical device to reflect on the possibility of voicing the invisible / silent, unprivileged, repressed or vulnerable for a "Collaborative Survival"⁴. It is a call to attend to what is happening unnoticed in front of our eyes, the unreckoned, the yet-to-be or in-between states of becoming, thus, to conceive and be liable for what is appearing on the horizon, though not visible nor clear, yet.

Informed by recent research in microbiology and anthropology to social sciences and environmental studies, the exhibition seeks to cultivate an experience in the junction of these separate scientific fields and contemporary art. *Hummings* will be a site where fiction and reality, animate and inanimate, culture and nature, science and belief, past and future, advanced and regressed, self and the (absolute) other melt into one another and merge. Instead of a progressive understanding of time and the dominant knowledge-production regimes, the exhibition suggests suspending our usual understanding of the relationship between such dualities, and proposes an interwovenness with many possible worlds, focusing on contingencies and entanglements.

Furthermore, the exhibition will comment on the present manifestations of art in public domain, attempting to connect its history with the current debates towards its future incarnations.

Aiming at reaching out to new and diverse audiences and expanding our curatorial agenda and scope, KØS Museum of Art in Public Spaces, in collaboration with the municipality of Køge, introduces *Humming*s as the pilot edition of a series of exhibitions that will be realized in every two years in the urban and rural geography of the city of Køge.

In the upcoming edition, there will be both existing works and new commissions juxtaposing fiction and poetry with the urban and rural public spaces of Køge. With the participation of 25 international and Danish artists, writers / poets and thinkers, it will include varied proposals in diverse formats such as performances, reading sessions, workshops, walking & talking tours, film screenings, architectural and sculptural interventions as well as video works and installations through wide-ranging narratives and imaginary that bring philosophy, science, history and poetry together.

Geographically, *Humming*s focuses on the bay of Køge: the industrial harbour and the marina, as well as the coasts on the two ends of the harbour. Tangmoseskoven, a small woods behind the marina which sits on top of a garbage hill, is also a part of the focus areas as it exemplifies what we call “nature” today in a hybrid form. From the bay, following the river that is going to the inner city of Køge, the promenade will facilitate the sea, the river, the square, the alleys (both public and private), the church area and the museum. Additionally, the social housing areas located on the periphery of the city such as Ellemarken and Hastrup will be involved.

¹ Olga Ravn, *The Employees: A workplace novel of the 22nd century*, Lolli Editions, 2020. Pp. 14-15 & pg. 40

² Lea Guldditte Hestelund: *Consumed Future Spewed Up As Present*, Overgaden, 2018

³ Drawing on the cross-cultural anthropological debates mostly by the South American scholars, we prefer to use this term in order to shift from the human-centred vantage point as well as escaping from the binary oppositional structure of the term “non-human”.

⁴ Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*, Princeton University Press, 2015