

## Stjernekurator has created a closed party for the initiates at KØS in Køge

*Even not good works of art by names like Rune Bosse and Lea Guldditte Hestelund can lift the internationally oriented exhibition project 'Hummingbirds' in Køge. In fact, the star curator does not seem to be interested in the public space one has chosen to exhibit in*



**Bodil Skovgaard Nielsen**



The Danish artist Rune Bosse has built decidedly future capsules in Tangskoven, which is an artificial forest laid out on top of an old landfill. Here he has insulated four trees in each of his greenhouses and will observe how they cope in the heat of the enclosure.

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### CULTURE

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KØS - The Museum of Art in Public Space has been given a mission. The museum wants to rid urban art of its arduous reputation for being

something with concrete in roundabouts. You want to go *out* into the world - and do something completely different with art.

That is why an exhibition entitled *Hummingbirds* has been launched , which can be translated with hum, buzz or white noise. 17 artists from both home and abroad have contributed completely new works, and the exhibition must give voice to everything that is described as "the invisible, silent, oppressed and vulnerable".

The task has been to appoint the Turkish star curator Fulya Erdemci, who has helped start the Istanbul Biennale, curated the Venice Biennale and been associated with museums in Amsterdam and Rome. And the works - they are far away from the roundabout, but spread out over Køge town, beach and forest.

All of this was marked with a grand opening on August 14 with performances, plays and ceremonies.

I do not experience it, but see the exhibition for a press show, where I hope that I myself can manage to sniff around a bit - now it should be about all the not so magnificent. Otherwise, I have to hold on to my reading glasses when I study the program statement:

" *Hummingbirds* wants to be a place where fiction and reality, living and lifeless, culture and nature, science and faith, past and future, advanced and 'backward', the self and the 'other' merge."

This can be called great ambition. Although I'm not quite sure what the abstract pairs of opposites really... mean?

## **Care at the roundabout**

Fortunately, it is fast becoming more concrete. The Danish artist Rune Bosse has built decidedly future capsules in Tangskoven, which is an artificial forest laid out on top of an old landfill. Here he has insulated four trees in each of their greenhouses and will observe how they cope in the heat of the enclosure.

The glass houses look like showcases that will be put on the natural history museums of the flooded globe sometime after the climate catastrophe. If that kind exists. Right now, at least, the horror creeps in on the walk.

Sculptor Lea Guldditte Hestelund also surprises positively. She has made a trilogy of works that show a creature born out of the underground in various places in the city. The middle sculpture, called "The Keeper", looks at first glance terrorist protection: From the roadway in a roundabout you can just see a large, gray stone.

But from inside the sidewalk, the sculpture reveals two large paws with claws hugging an egg in the belly. You can crawl into the creature's belly if you want. In the middle of the cobblestones and traffic, the artist has created a glimmer of care.



Lea Guldditte Hestelund has created a friendly monster for the exhibition. But curatorially, 'Humming's' is a messy and embarrassing experience.

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The same sense of loving protest has author and artist Jakob Jakobsen, who has written 'ANXIETY' with large, yellow graffiti letters on a wall in an expensive-looking new building. It scratches effectively in the surfaces of neatness.

Two other beautiful works extend the tenderness to include the animal kingdom. Turkish Ayse Erkmen has made a tiny memorial for the last

specimen of a now extinct Hawaiian snail, which can just be seen on a tree by the city church.

And in Brazilian Jonathas de Andrade's touching video work in a shed by the beach, a man gently lays his cheek to a bouncing fish. As if he were comforting an unhappy child. Only later does it strike me that the fish is in the middle of its death struggle.

## **The family journal of art**

But then the house of cards otherwise begins to falter. This happens, for example, in Swedish Kerstin Bergendal's work, which is a series of photos of eight kitchen citizens in the place in the city they like best.

The portrayed say banalities about shadow and view, while the tool text proclaims the project to be a testimony to cosmic cohesion. I wonder if not even Family Journal readers would find that kind of voxpop a tooth too sugary. It is in a way a classic relational work that will create social situations around art, but oh, how foot-shaped it is.

The same must I say about Turkish Hale Tegner's sound installation in the forest. From a speaker that is a little needlessly taped to a wooden crown, a woman's voice whispers:

*» Can you be like a bird on a tree? «. » The water finds its crack. Can you be like the water? Asks the woman. And finally: " There is a crack in everything ".*

I have a hard time seeing how the world's probably most revered Leonard Cohen quote could “fuse culture and nature,” or whatever it was the exhibition wanted. The work literally speaks down to me up there from the tree.

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One of the exhibition's many performance works has been created by the German concept artist Karin Sander. In her work, city dwellers have to balance on one leg on an unstable cobblestone.

But I can only read about it in the brochure, and it is like a few other performances not traced documented with video or photo in the urban space. If you were not in Køge for the fancy opening, the works can only be experienced one or two dates again. As far as I can see, you even have to troop up to the museum to get hold of a brochure with times - they are not online.

Here I get the feeling that *Humming's* is a closed party for the already initiated. It's a bit like hearing an exclusive disco with a secret address brand itself as the new, democratic meeting place for all walks of life.

## **Witches over the homeless**

Another event I have not been to is author Olga Ravn's launch of a memorial for the women who were accused of being witches in medieval Køge. It was celebrated with “a ceremony of herbal drinks” on August 14, which is not repeated.

In addition to the ceremony, Ravn has authored a book that further poems about the 16 accused of witchcraft with monologues, where they see visions and pray to Satan. But hey. Was not the point that the women were innocently convicted, that they were scapegoats, sick, just women

and unlucky? The work seems pretty quickly to forget the seriousness of death associated with witchcraft, and acids out into funny metaphor.

It might have been fine, poetic justice, if not also the book contained passages where a poet self comes with the S-train from Copenhagen to Køge. She will "let the accused of witchcraft come to me." The poet then performs a series of semi-magical rituals and contemplates the contemporary provincial inhabitants who, in her eyes, are still in the Middle Ages mentally:

»On the window into a home shop, the motto:» Everything that the neighbor does not have «. It is so *core* -Køge, both now and in 1612. Køge, *you have not changed* «.

The pamphlet contains magic forms taken from folklore collections and a number of recipes on how to dye your own clothes in nature.

But in my eyes, the work does not end up being so much remembered as it gets to cultivate the witch figure as a slightly fashionable form of fragility; the book's guides are similar to advertisements for a New Nordic lifestyle, where you drink gin with elderflower and home-colored recycled linen.

All this is underlined by a baroque situation unfolding during the press screening.

Olga Ravn talks about visiting the same green path in Køge several times to open her body to the history of the place. Meanwhile, a House Past salesman stands next to him and yells at passers-by. He has a big, white beard, leather-brown skin and with his cowboy hat could well go on to be the 21st century Merlin.

And it's him, I think, who has to find a new place to sleep every day, the one who actually knows how the grass smells in the morning dew.

Not all of us cultural journalists and artists who school for the man when he overpowers us, but nod enthusiastically, just someone says nice words



like 'ritual repetition'.

## Embarrassing curation

*Humming's* at KØS has given *birth* to a couple of good works that go lovingly in the flesh on the city's materials and conditions. Rune Bosse, Lea Guldditte Hestelund and Jakob Jakobsen have a good eye for the fact that the urban space is both harsh and uneven. That it has a history but can still be influenced.

But curatorially, *Humming's* is a messy and embarrassing experience that does not seem to be genuinely interested in its subject field: the public space with all its layers and opposites. Too many of the works one has included are too simple and too self-indulgent.

What was supposed to be a multi-voiced project has been wrapped up in lavish but incomprehensible technical terms. What was supposed to be the involvement of the citizens has ended up as a series of exclusive events. And what was supposed to present untold stories is going to seem deeply old-fashioned when you are just allowed to hear a little Leonard Cohen, talk about your favorite hangout, and indulge in a half-witched drink.

'Humming's'. KØS. Until September 29th.



Eight foodies have been asked to showcase their favorite place in town. It's more like voxpop than art.

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