



Explore the ego and your inner voyeur

The Aarhus Art Building inflates egos and deflates moral outrage and inhibitions in the first exhibition of the year.

Theme of the year – *EGO?*

Go on a sensual journey in 2012 when the Aarhus Art Building unleashes the ego in artistic interpretations. Who am I? Why am I here? How was I created and how do I create myself?

In the exhibition programme for 2012 the theme of the year, *EGO?*, sets aside dogma, moral outrage and inhibitions and creates a space where artists from Denmark and abroad, each in their own way, present their interpretations of the ego. The exhibition year *EGO?* is presented in four seasons and begins with *The Freezing WINTER: Ego and Psyche*, in which the Aarhus Art Building offers no less than two solo exhibitions and a video programme:

Ulrik Heltoft & Tamar Guimarães

The Danish artist Ulrik Heltoft and the Brazilian artist Tamar Guimarães both relate in their own way to the concepts of ego and psyche. They are presented in two large solo exhibitions, both conceived and staged for the Aarhus Art Building. In the exhibitions the public will encounter video installations, audio and slide works, photography, 16 mm film as well as physical sculptural works.

The video programme *LOOK AT ME*

LOOK AT ME revolves around narcissism, exhibitionism, loneliness and the longing to be seen. Here video forms the close interface between artist and public. *LOOK AT ME* shows seminal works by Vito Acconci (USA), Peter Land (DK), Lilibeth Cuenca Rasmussen (RP) and Jette Hye Jin Mortensen (DK/KOR).

See among other things Peter Land's breakthrough work, where the Danish artist dances and strips to pop music, while filming himself and literally exposing the male gender role. A video that turns the focus on the narcissistic obsession with the body of the nineties. Or experience Vito Acconci's famous work *Theme Song* (1973), where he flirts with and manipulates the viewer. In self-stagings and embarrassments, that challenge our sense of decorum, the winter's video programme pursues what the art theoretician Rosalind Krauss has called "the narcissistic aesthetics of video".

From unstable psyches to cool deliberation, the year's first exhibition period *The Freezing WINTER: Ego and Psyche* offers unique insight into present-day and historical artistic ways of discussing identity. All three exhibitions run from 21 January to 18 March 2012.

Under the heading of the 2012 theme *EGO?, the Aarhus Art Building* welcomes everyone to an inspiring debate about the body, intimacy and identity.

Open house for the press – Thursday 19 January 12 – 2 p.m.

Opening – Friday 20 January 5 – 9 p.m.

Opening speech by Pernille Taagaard Dinesen, Curator at ARoS.

Performance by Jette Hye Jin Mortensen, *TELL IT THE WAY THEY WROTE IT*.

For further information and appointments for interviews, contact communication officer Birgitte Sonne Kristensen at bk@aarhuskb.dk. Dir.: +45 86 20 60 54

EGO?

Read more about the individual exhibitions on the following pages.

Ulrik Heltoft: *1848/1954/2060 and other specimens*

21. January - 18. March 2012



Ulrik Heltoft: *1848/1954/2060* - Part 1, 2010

In an educational journey through history, Ulrik Heltoft's exhibition explores the ego in a modern world. There are intervals of 106 years between the historical egos that Ulrik Heltoft plays through in his work *1848/1954/2060*, which is shown as three 16 mm film projections in different formats. The first film, *1848*, is set in the year of the Gold Rush in the USA. A gold prospector is carving out a gold mine with the aid of his pick and his intuition. In the film *1954*, Heltoft poses as a vain architect in a modernist architecture of straight lines that dissolves into animated sequences. In the third film, *2060*, an anonymous figure disintegrates in an endless trek through a pointless landscape.

An essential element of *1848/1954/2060* is the techniques used by Ulrik Heltoft: anamorphic lenses, loops, distorted perspectives and staggered chronology. The recognizable filmic stories disappear just before they can be decoded, and shift into new areas of meaning.

In the second room of the exhibition, Heltoft and the American-Filipino artist Miljohn Ruperto show the work *Voynich Botanical Studies*. The work is based on the enigmatic plant illustrations in the *Voynich Manuscript* from the 16th century, which has been called "the world's most mysterious manuscript". In one manipulated photograph the artists re-create the enigmatic fictive universe of the manuscript.

About Ulrik Heltoft

Ulrik Heltoft (b. 1973) graduated from The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in 1999 and from Yale University in 2001. He is an associate professor of photography at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and has had solo exhibitions at Kirkhoff Contemporary Art, Raucci e Santamaria in Naples and Wilfried Lentz in Rotterdam. His works have also been shown at places such as Participants Inc., New Museum, Anthology Film Archive in New York, and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. Heltoft's artistic activity is characterized by formally rigorous, technically perfect works in which minimal displacements suggest that "something else" is at play. Heltoft's solo exhibition *1848/1954/2060 and other specimens* has been created specifically for the Aarhus Art Building.

Tamar Guimarães: *The Afterlife (of names and things)*
21. January - 18. March 2012



Tamar Guimarães: *Dura Lex Sed Lex*, 2009

In the second solo exhibition of the winter, *The Afterlife (of names and things)*, the Brazilian-born artist Tamar Guimarães deals with “unpleasant artefacts”. In an exploration of how our identity is formed by work, social privilege, culture and nationality, four works are presented, each telling a precarious story about an individual from the 19th and 20th century.

The installation *Dura Lex Sed Lex* (2009) is about the German judge, Daniel Paul Schreber, who suffered a mental breakdown, as well as a present-day supreme court judge who agreed to participate in a hypnotic session. The work *A Man Called Love* (2008), tells the story of a famous spirit medium, the ‘psychographer’ Francisco Candido Xavier, who developed a special writing technique for receiving messages from spirits. In *The Work of the Spirit (Parade)* (2011) a number of ballet dancers appear in photographs, text and video. In the film projection *Canoas* (2010), a beautiful modernist villa built by Oscar Niemeyer on the slopes of Rio de Janeiro forms the setting for a slightly heady cocktail party. The cast is a mixture of actors and cultural personalities playing themselves.

About Tamar Guimarães

Tamar Guimarães (b. 1967) was born in Brazil and lives and works in Copenhagen. She attended the Whitney Independent Study Program (NY) after graduating from Goldsmiths College (2002), the Malmö Art Academy in Sweden (2007) and the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts (2009).

She has recently exhibited at the Gasworks in London, the 29th São Paulo Bienal, Frac Le Plateau in Paris, the Nordic Triennial at the Eskilstuna Museum in Sweden, Lunds Konsthall in Sweden, Stiftelsen 3,14 in Bergen, Norway, the David Risly Gallery in Copenhagen, Artspace Sydney and the Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane, Australia, the 7th Gwangju Biennale in Korea and the 3rd Guangzhou Triennial in China.

Guimarães’ preferred media are film, slides, audio and text. She works at a research-based level with found materials which she manipulates, restructures and presents as case studies.

LOOK AT ME

21. January - 18. March 2012

Besides the two solo exhibitions, the winter season also offers the video programme *LOOK AT ME*, showing groundbreaking works by Vito Acconci, Peter Land, Lilibeth Cuenca Rasmussen and Jette Hye Jin Mortensen. Through self-stagings and embarrassments that challenge our sense of decorum, their works focus on what the art theoretician Rosalind Krauss has defined “the narcissistic aesthetics of video”.

“There must be someone looking at me – someone who wants to get close to me. I’ll do anything, wait and see,” chants the artist **Vito Acconci**, sprawling on his living-room floor smoking a cigarette. In an incoherent monologue he quotes lyrics by The Doors, Bob Dylan and Kris Kristofferson, while undisguisedly flirting with the camera. *THEME SONG* (1973), with its ironic mixture of openness and manipulation, is one of Acconci’s most striking works.

In the video, *PETER LAND 5 May 1994* (1994), **Peter Land** dances drunkenly around in his bedroom, while stripping and filming himself. He literally strips off the male gender role and turns the focus on the narcissistic body fetishism of the nineties, while making a complete fool of himself. The work touchingly pillories the male gender and is the artist’s breakthrough work.

In *EGO SONG* (2006), **Lilibeth Cuenca Rasmussen** stands in a sunsuit and a blonde wig. “I am the centre of the universe,” she sings, as she basks in the light of her own ego trip: “Pleasing my EGO is my goal”. With her diva-like image she is hunting for recognition and constant gratification. *Ego Song* is one of Lilibeth’s best known works.

In the video *TELL IT THE WAY THEY TELL IT* (2009) **Jette Hye Jin Mortensen** relates to being categorized as an “adopted artist”. With the aid of a Danish film director she has created a collective ritual in the form of a new interpretation of Buddhist meditation types. The work revolves around a non-verbal collectivity where the senses are sharpened and used for reciprocal exchanges of ideas.

About the artists

Vito Acconci (b. 1940, USA) is known for his influential, provocative and often radical artistic practice. He primarily uses performance, film, video and multimedia installations where he engages in intense psychodramatic dialogue between artist and viewer.

Peter Land (b. 1967, DK) is known for his humorous, often self-ironic video, performance and installation works. He thematizes the absurd aspects of existence, including the heterosexual man’s loss of control, in a tribute to slapstick comedy, Fluxus happenings, Dada and the Theatre of the Absurd.

Lilibeth Cuenca Rasmussen (b. 1970, DK/PHI) has an anthropological eye for narrative. Her artistic investigations are based on her Danish-Filipino background, and questions the egoism and macho culture of the age. At the same time she works with performance in the space between the music video and the reality of the documentary film.

Jette Hye Jin Mortensen (b. 1980, DK/KOR) relates to being a Korean adoptee in Denmark. Her works often involve a critique of cultural politics and she uses a wealth of symbols of nationality, identity-building and ‘belonging’. She has a background in rhythmical and classical music as well as the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, and works with performance art and video.