

MODIFICATIONS 2010

In 2010 the Aarhus Art Building takes the first step in the implementation of a whole new strategy, where each year the exhibition program will be planned on the basis of an overall theme. The chosen theme must be challenging and topical and lend a voice to central issues in the world of art right now. In 2010 the theme is *Modifications*.

Modifications is a reference to the Danish artist Asger Jorn's exhibition of the same name in Paris 50 years ago, where he presented a series of kitsch-paintings on top of which he had painted his own additions. With the exhibition Jorn attempted to once and for all dispel the notion of art as something sublime and autonomous. The members of the international artist group Situationist International, which Jorn along with the French theorist Guy Debord had founded a few years earlier, held a firm belief in the revolutionary potential of the artistic process. Art was seen as a possible way out of the meaningless and empty pseudo-society that the members of the group referred to as the 'Society of the Spectacle'. Although the group

ended up dissolving itself rather than art as such, contemporary art in many ways still stands on a similar bastion: between destruction and construction – or between partial displacement and pure action, one might also say. This state of the art, so to speak, within contemporary art, plus its historical source, forms the basis for the theme *Modifications*. It is the intention of the 2010 exhibition program to shed new light on the issue and to raise the question of whether art presents a way out of the all-encompassing grip of the Society of the Spectacle. A question that is just as relevant today as it was 50 years ago.

J & K

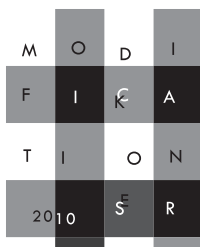
THE PERFECT STAGE

26. JUNE - 15. AUGUST 2010



In one overall installation J&K present a large colourful collage of images, objects, textiles, paper collages, theatre elements, video, sound and light. The work functions both as an installation and as a stage for a performance and a non-existent film. The artist duo J&K, Janne Schäfer (D) and Kristine Agergaard, (DK) have worked together since 1999. They work with installations in mixed media, performances and interventions in public and institutional spaces. Their works are a colourful play on signs, clichés and identities with their origins in journeys, rituals and mythologies. The audience is guided into constructed worlds and cross-cultural universes where investigations of various

postcolonial and cultural problems are conducted. J&K explore the creative potential underlying any construction of reality, and playfully question concepts such as truth, history and cultural identity. The duo is based in Berlin and Copenhagen and has exhibited in Denmark and abroad in both solo and group exhibitions.



MODIFICATIONS 2010
IS SPONSORED BY

Augustinus Fonden
Knud Højgaards Fond
Danske Initiativpuljer
STARK

BIKUBENFONDEN

HUBER
HUBERTSKILTE.DK

THE EXHIBITION IS SPONSORED BY

The Danish Arts Council Committee for International Visual Art

The Cultural Development Foundation – The Municipality of Aarhus

The Danish Arts Council Committee for Visual Arts

The National Workshops for Arts and Crafts



THE AARHUS ART BUILDING
IS SPONSORED BY



ÅRHUS KUNSTBYGNING

J.M. MØRKS GADE 13 DK-8000 ÅRHUS C

T: +45 86 20 60 50 E: info@aarhuskb.dk W: www.aarhuskunstbygning.dk

THE JOURNEY TOWARDS PERFECTION

In the exhibition *The Perfect Stage* the first thing you encounter is the large mountain that is the focus of the installation. The mountain can be climbed by way of the steep 'mountain slope' with the aid of ropes or via the three stages that lead to the top of the mountain in several steps. The central theme of the exhibition is 'the stage' as a place for dramatization, a place where reality can be constructed and tested.

In the exhibition the artists investigate whether perfection exists. The path to perfect conditions and to a perfect world is explored and tested through occult rituals, experiments and staged identities. The journey to the top of the mountain represents the artists' quest for perfection. In the exhibition J&K challenge the Utopian task of finding 'the perfect'.

The Perfect Stage is inspired by the film *The Holy Mountain* (Alejandro Jodorowsky, 1973) and the novel *Mount Analogue* (René Daumal, 1952). In the book an expedition travels towards the mountain "that cannot NOT exist". The mountain is invisible to ordinary people and only shows itself in the right circumstances and to the specially initiated.

ABSTRACT MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPE

Around the mountain the rest of the installation spreads in a variety of psychedelic, brilliantly coloured shades. An abstract landscape unfolds with camps, caves and a sunset. Scattered around in the landscape you encounter things, costumes, sculptural objects and collages. Many of the elements in the installation have roots in the material culture of mountain-climbing or in consciousness-expanding exercises and rituals.

In a video the artists themselves appear as conjurers, mountaineers, pilgrims, alchemists, sorcerers and spiritual seekers; characters whose clothes and objects can be found all around the installation.

At the bottom of the stairway is a nomade camp – built of bamboo poles and colourful cloth sides. In the camp various objects have been set up and a 'chill-out' environment invites you to relax. Behind layers of rugs and textiles inside the camp there is an opening to a black hole that leads out into the darkness and unknown depths, where the senses and consciousness must work at a hectic pace to create a feeling of place and space.

A horizontal sunset spreads out in one of the far corners of the installation. The sun sets from left to right instead of downwards and makes the landscape a distorted image of reality.

In the alchemical kitchen inside the mountain, yellowish fluids form the basis for attempts to find the Holy Grail.

A large hexagonal silk membrane 2.5 metres in diameter creates an ethereal visual impression with psychedelic patterns.

The installation also functions as the set for a film that is shot during the exhibition period with the film-maker Fritz Stolberg as artistic collaborator.

On Saturday 14th August J&K carry out the performance *Descending the Holy Mountain* as an element in the closing of the exhibition.