

Press release

On Friday, August 29, 2008, at 17:00 the Aarhus Art Building presents the opening of:

Katarzyna Kozyra **The Midget Gallery presents ... In Art Dreams Come True**

30. august – 26. oktober 2008

In art dreams can come true, and in Polish artist Katarzyna Kozyra's filmic universe everything is possible: Baroque fairy tales populated by drag queens interacting with Snow White and the seven dwarfs plus obscene and disturbing scenes with a woman in a cage and castration are just some of the scenarios meeting the visitor at this thought provoking and controversial exhibition. The exhibition presents selected videos from the series *In Art Dreams Come True*. Simultaneously the exhibition marks the world premier of the last work in the series, *A Summer Tale*, co-produced by Galleri Image.

The Midget Gallery presents ... In Art Dreams Come True deals with fundamental questions about human identity and gender. Both have been formed by society's consensus about what is right or wrong, beautiful or ugly. Kozyra confronts myths, taboos and stereotypes of this kind and uses them to discuss the conventions behind human nature, behavior in the social sphere, and standards for beauty, gender and body.

In her works Kozyra mixes the video medium with art performance and installation. Her universe unfolds in an area between dreams and reality. The palpable, colorful and lopsided stagings are humoristic but still prod the onlooker to deal with his or her own prejudices and desire. Kozyra stages herself in different feminine roles – from a cheerleader in close encounters with muscular athletes to an opera diva directed by the strict "Maestro" – and thus starts a discussion about what femininity is. She challenges our understanding of sex roles and identity and through her art she exemplifies the post-modern notion of gender as something chosen by the individual. Gender is not just something we obtain at birth, but also something that's acquired by means of factors like behavior, environment and culture. In her theatrical performances Kozyra demonstrates this by literally using gender as a costume to be put on or taken off again. When one sex can turn into the other, the division between man and woman gets blurred, and society's notions about sexual categories become unstable.

Katarzyna Kozyra (b. 1963) has received great recognition through her artistic career and was honored at the Venice Biennale in 1999.

The exhibition will be opened by Elzbieta Wykretowicz, Cultural Attaché at The Polish Embassy in Denmark. Katarzyna Kozyra and curator Hanna Wróblewska will be present at the opening.

The exhibition is curated by Hanna Wróblewska, Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw in collaboration with Beate Cegielska, Galleri Image. The exhibition is sponsored by The Danish Arts Council's Committee for International Visual Arts, The Danish Arts Council's Committee for Visual Arts, the Cultural Development Foundation, the Municipality of Aarhus, The Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Denmark, Calamus, Montana Furniture and Consul George Jorck and Emma Jorck's Fund.

In connection with the exhibition a seminar about sex, gender and identity will be held on Saturday, September 27 with presentations by MA and Ph.D. Rune Gade, associated professor at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies at the University of Copenhagen, and Tina Raun, MA in art history and scientific assistant at the Institute of Art History at the University of Aarhus. Rune Gade will speak about "Body and Gender", and Tina Raun will speak about 'Gender as a Theatrical Effect'.

After the opening a catalogue with photographs from the exhibition at the Aarhus Art Building will be published.

For further information or appointments for interviews with the artist, who will be in Aarhus beginning August 26, please contact Anne Fogtmann Madsen at (+45) 86 20 60 55 or send a mail to af@aarhuskb.dk. Press photographs can be downloaded from our web site: www.aarhuskunstbygning.dk

Sincerely

Pernille Lyngsø
Curator and exhibition coordinator,
The Aarhus Art Building

