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Astrup Fearnley Museet 30 Years

Before Tomorrow

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22.06.—03.12.2023

Astrup Fearnley Museet celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2023. To mark this significant milestone, the museum is presenting the exhibition *Before Tomorrow*, which features over one hundred works from the Astrup Fearnley Collection, displayed across the museum's two buildings. Beginning in the 1960s, founder Hans Rasmus Astrup assembled a collection which emphasized artists and their bodies of work, rather than historical periods or stylistic trends. By the time of his passing, the Astrup Fearnley Collection contained more than 1 500 works. *Before Tomorrow* demonstrates Astrup's unique contribution to the field of contemporary art and offers insights into this collection—which is one of the most wide-ranging amongst the Nordic countries—whilst also signaling the future direction of the museum.

Some works and artists have been particularly significant for the public's perception of the Astrup Fearnley Collection, such as American artist Jeff Koons' *Michael Jackson and Bubbles* (1988), and several works by British artist Damien Hirst. *Before Tomorrow* encourages new readings of these practices and others, by presenting them in dialogue with recent acquisitions as well as lesser-known works.

Additionally, some works that are considered to be cornerstones of the collection and which the public has come to expect when visiting Astrup Fearnley Museet, are not on display this time. Through the absence of these works, and the works selected for *Before Tomorrow*, the exhibition allows for new aspects of the collection to become visible, and accentuate its distinctive character in unfamiliar ways.

THE ERA OF CONTEMPORARY ART

The 1990s is considered to be one of the pivotal moments in contemporary art history and is a crucial reference point for *Before Tomorrow*. Many of the works presented in this exhibition were created in the lead-up to, during, or immediately following this decade, which was also when Astrup Fearnley Museet was founded, in 1993. Of significance is that several artists that are featured in the collection had their career breakthroughs in and around the 1990s, such as Matthew Barney, Vanessa Baird, Paul Chan, Trisha Donnelly, Nicole Eisenman, Elmgreen & Dragset, Félix González-Torres, Douglas Gordon, Rachel Harrison, Damien Hirst, Børre Sæthre, and Kara Walker.

From the beginning, Astrup Fearnley Museet has focused on what is, at a given time, the art of the present, by following innovative practitioners and their work, rather than attempting to canonize historical artworks retrospectively. By looking back on its 30th anniversary, the museum has been able to reveal how its collection also reflects contemporary art as an era. For some, the starting point of this era can be dated to the 1960s when the dissolution of established categories, such as painting and sculpture, gave way to conceptual, ephemeral, and performative practices, whilst others have summarized the era of contemporary art as a global turn after approximately 1990.

Before Tomorrow highlights how the Astrup Fearnley Collection, which contains key discourses, tendencies and works that have come to define this epoch, has always navigated its own understanding of the present. Due to the museum's location in Norway, it has also been able to make ample room for Norwegian and Nordic artists to contribute to the continually unfolding story of international contemporary art.

The exhibition includes examples of conceptualism and the institutional critique typical of the 1970s, alongside the playful postmodernism of the 1980s, and the Norwegian neo-conceptualism of the 2000s. The consistently solid position of photography throughout these decades is apparent in the exhibition, as is the ubiquity of film and video art. The breakthrough of installation art as a genre can additionally be linked to the 1990s, as the collapse of the art market in the late 1980s led to a renewed interest in conceptual art, temporary installations, and performance art. Painting is also abundantly represented in the exhibition, as both abstract and figurative painting have endured, whilst an increasingly conceptual approach has contributed to the revitalization of the medium.

Such categorization—of grouping artworks by medium and forms of expression—is nevertheless secondary to highlighting the strong bodies of work by individual artists in the collection, as well as the content and themes of each artwork. Several works in the exhibition deal with personal and collective identities, raising questions of gender, sexuality, and cultural belonging. The sensual and corporeal is also clearly present in psychologically charged artworks, often with a dark subtext. On the other hand, humorous and intellectually challenging works similarly abound.

DEFINED BY TIME, YET TIMELESS

Before Tomorrow largely avoids chronological and thematic organizing principles. Instead, by using an organic structure, the exhibition seeks to reflect the heterogeneous nature of the collection. Each room provides space for individual works, and encourages encounters across generations, nationalities, media, and forms of expression. Kinship and affinities arise between artists such as Rachel Harrison and Charles Ray, Laura Owens and Raymond Pettibon, or Robert Gober and Frida Orupabo.

By trusting in the autonomy of the artworks within these juxtapositions, and without a demand for them to tell a particular art historical narrative or fit within a unifying theme, a plurality and porosity is formed between the works, and throughout the exhibition. However, the evolving identity of the collection and how it has been compiled since its founding in the late 1960s, was a catalyst for identifying two particular interpretive lenses that have been used to conceptualize the exhibition.

The first is the notion of *temporality*. The fact that several works created and acquired earlier in the museum's history still clearly resonate with the aesthetic, social and political concerns of today, demonstrates the timeless vitality of so many contemporary artworks. Works that take their specific historical context as a point of departure are recontextualized and actualized, to become relevant again. This is particularly the case for Shirin Neshat's *Fervor* (2001), in which the artist responded to a shifting Iranian identity following Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution. As this momentous work is reinstalled today, it challenges our perception of progress, and raises vital questions about the current situation for women in Iran.

A second interpretive lens is that of *movability*, the notion of *journey*. The act of collecting, itself, requires movement across varied geographical, intellectual, and psychological fields, often gathering objects from disparate contexts and presenting them in close proximity to one another. It is the journey that is suggested on the part of a collector or institution by bringing these objects together, conceptually and materially, which informs this lens. The two Thomas Struth photographs included in the exhibition, *Art Institute of Chicago 2, Chicago* (1990) and *Nanjing Xi Lu, Shanghai* (1997), speak to both of the interpretive lenses, by simultane-

ously pointing to distinct geographical, cultural, and temporal contexts, whilst also highlighting the very institutions in which they are entangled.

The work of significant international and Norway-based artists of a younger generation are also represented in the exhibition. These include paintings by American artists Walter Price and Georgia Gardner Gray, and the installation by British artist Helen Marten, *Orchids, or a hemispherical bottom* (2013). These are shown alongside the work of young artists currently distinguishing themselves in the Norwegian contemporary art scene, such as Frida Orupabo and Mikael Lo Presti. *Before Tomorrow* also presents several major installations and video works from the Astrup Fearnley Collection, some of which were recently acquired for the collection and are reconstructed here for the first time since they were initially displayed.

Børre Sæthre's *My Private Sky* (2001), which was acquired for the collection in 2022, is now considered an iconic work from the turn of the millennium, and is characteristic of the immersive and totalizing experience of installation art. It is executed with scenographic precision, and sits midway between seductive interior design and a disturbing film set. While photographs of *My Private Sky* have been featured on the covers of art history publications, it has not been possible until now to experience this site-specific installation since it was first shown in 2001, in the museum's previous building in Kvadraturen, Oslo.

The installation on display by Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla, *Clamor* (2006), explores the relationship between sound, music, and war. At times during the exhibition, dueling musicians situated inside the work, who are only visible through small apertures in its exterior, create a cacophonous sound montage of historical military songs.

Kara Walker's expansive mural *THE SOVEREIGN CITIZENS SESQUICENTENNIAL CIVIL WAR CELEBRATION* (2013), is a new acquisition for the collection, and is recreated in the main exhibition space. Walker's distinctive style, of combining the poetic and the gruesome for this monumental work, consists of silhouettes cut from white paper affixed to a black wall, which depicts an imaginary battle scene from the American Civil War recreated as a historical reenactment for a civil war commemoration in 2011.

Other recent acquisitions presented in the exhibition are seven photographs by Wolfgang Tillmans, from his *Concorde* project, which he started in 1997. The series was displayed in 2022 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York as part of his critically acclaimed retrospective, and now Oslo also has an opportunity to view these early works by the artist.

Since its foundation in 1993, Astrup Fearnley Museet has played a central role in the development of contemporary art in Norway as well as the wider Nordic region.

Today the museum is an independent institution serving the public, following the same model and trajectory as comparable international museums which began as private initiatives, and it holds an important position in Norway by being an institution that is solely dedicated to contemporary art. The museum contributes to preserving art being produced in the present, as well as further developing the field through its temporary exhibition program and its strong commitment to commissioning new works.

Hans Rasmus Astrup passed away in 2021, and generously bequeathed funds, as well as the entire Astrup Fearnley Collection, to the non-profit foundations that run the museum. This enables the museum to continue the work that Astrup initiated, by regularly expanding the Astrup Fearnley Collection with new acquisitions, and further developing the institution as an inclusive platform for art.

“It’s vital that art isn’t locked away. It needs to be shown and experienced. We have to learn from it.”

– Hans Rasmus Astrup

List of works

1

Per Inge Bjørlo

Livet (Kols), 2008

Stainless steel

141 x 177 x 185 cm

Hanne Borchgrevink

Husdikt, 2007

Acrylic and egg tempera on canvas

120 x 120 cm

Mark Bradford

When It Stops Snowing, 2010

Mixed media collage on canvas

260 x 370 cm

Fischli & Weiss

Provisional Arrangement, 1984

Vintage silver print

41 x 31 cm

Fischli & Weiss

Night's Dangers, 1984

Vintage silver print

41 x 28 cm

Fischli & Weiss

Untitled, 1985

Vintage silver print

40 x 30 cm

Gunnar S. Gundersen

Komposisjon, 1967

Oil on canvas

120 x 120 cm

Shilpa Gupta

There is No Explosives in This-Table II

Manchester International Airport, 2007

67 confiscated objects from international airports

103 x 160 x 65 cm

Sergej Jensen

Untitled, 2008

Sewn fabric

220 x 180 cm

Olav Christopher Jenssen

Love Letter Headings for Brontë Sisters

No. 03, 31, 82, 85, 86, 107, 118, 1994-1997

Oil and acrylic on wood

32 x 24 cm

Ibrahim Mahama

ODO NTI, 2013-2018

Worn traditional smocks on charcoal jute sacks

338 x 527 x 30 cm

Helen Marten

Orchids, or a hemispherical bottom, 2013

Video, Formica, walnut and maple wall

panel, yellow pine architectural model,

jointed wooden handrail assemblage, two

jointed wooden curves, airbrushed steel

clock, two aluminium woven baskets, and

two maple and ash benches

Dimensions variable

19:24 min

Julie Mehretu

Mumbo Jumbo, 2008

Ink and acrylic on canvas

244 x 366 cm

Jason Rhoades

The World with Unpainted Donkey, 2003

PeaRoeFoam sphere, plastic barrel, wood,

neon panel (glass, plexi, wire, transformer),

wire, and cast fiberglass donkey

193 x 69 x 69 cm

Thomas Struth

Art Institute of Chicago 2, Chicago, 1990

C-print

184 x 219 cm

Thomas Struth

Nanjing Xi Lu, Shanghai, 1997

C-print

142 x 180 cm

Fredrik Værsvlev

Untitled (Canopy Painting, Cream and

Orange VII), 2012

Primer, spray paint, corrosion-protective

spray, and white spirit on canvas

198 x 351 cm

Kara Walker

THE SOVEREIGN CITIZENS

SESQUICENTENNIAL CIVIL WAR

CELEBRATION, 2013

Cut paper and adhesive on wall

Dimensions variable

Jeff Wall

Sunken Area, 1996

Color photographic transparency in

lightbox

234 x 290 x 26 cm

Yang Fudong

Lock Again, 2004

Video, transferred from 16 mm film
3 min

2

Elmgreen & Dragset

Gay Marriage, 2010

Porcelain urinals, taps, and stainless steel tubing
110 x 43 x 123 cm

Torbjørn Rødland

Socks, Shoes and Tail, 2020

Chromogenic print on Kodak Endura paper
60 x 76 cm

Synnøve Anker Aurdal

Kobberteppet 3, 1970

Wool, copper wire, synthetic yarn, and bast fiber and synthetic thread
198 x 257 x 14 cm

Mona Hatoum

Lili (stay) put, 1996

Mild steel and nylon thread
Bed: 48 x 67 x 180 cm
Overall: 70 x 250 x 300 cm

Annika von Hausswolff

Mom and dad are making out, 1999

C-print
137 x 112 cm

Eline Mugaas

Red bathroom, 2022

Mounted archival inkjet print
60 x 45 cm

Eline Mugaas

Black Outline, 2017

Mounted archival inkjet print
60 x 45 cm

Eline Mugaas

Full Moon on the Screen, 2022

Mounted archival inkjet print
60 x 45 cm

Eline Mugaas

Trapezoid, 2016

Mounted archival inkjet print
49 x 60 cm

Asal Peirovi

In Search of a U-Turn, 2021

Acrylic and Ecoline on linen
102 x 85 cm

3

Ida Ekblad

STEEL MUTANT SMELTED GIRL, 2020

Oil on linen in artist's frame
185 x 425 cm

Elmgreen & Dragset

He (Gold), 2012

Epoxy resin and gold leaf
180 x 120 x 100 cm

Robert Gober

Untitled, 1993–1994

Beeswax, human hair, sock, and leather shoe
30 x 72 x 85 cm

Jeff Koons

Three Ball Total Equilibrium Tank

(*Dr. J. Silver Series*), 1985

Glass, steel, sodium chloride reagent, distilled water, and three basketballs
154 x 124 x 34 cm

Bruce Nauman

Run from Fear, Fun from Rear, 1972

Neon tubing with clear glass tubing suspension frame
Part 1: 20 x 117 x 6 cm
Part 2: 18 x 113 x 6 cm

Bruce Nauman

Setting a Good Corner (Allegory & Metaphor), 1999

Video (color, sound)
59:30 min

Laura Owens

Untitled, 2015

Oil, silkscreen inks, Flashe, charcoal, acrylic, and gesso on linen
351 x 264 cm

Laura-Owens

Untitled, 2023

Oil, Flashe, screen-printing ink, and colored sand on clay-coated wallpaper mounted on primed aluminum and stained wood
155 x 125 cm

Raymond Pettibon

No Title (these last years), 2004

Pen and ink on paper
199 x 198 cm

Charles Ray

Bench, 1974

Photo and wooden plank

Photo: 16 x 23 cm

Plank: 4 x 305 x 28 cm

4**Bruce Nauman**

Venice Fountains, 2007

Wax, plaster, wire, sinks, faucets, clear

hoses, pumps, and water

196 x 59 x 65 cm each

Janine Antoni

Grope, 1990

84 pockets from men's work trousers

122 x 152 x 122 cm

Georgia Gardner Gray

Minors, 2022

Oil on canvas

160 x 160 cm

Douglas Gordon

Through a looking glass, 1999

Two-screen video installation

Dimensions variable

60 min

R.B. Kitaj

The Jewish Rider, 1984–1985

Oil on canvas

152 x 152 cm

Mikael Lo Presti

Tapestry / Paus, 2021

Oil, wood glue, acrylic, and pigment on canvas

100 x 70 cm

Walter Price

Retrograde analysis, 2021

Acrylic, oil pastel, and gesso on canvas

152 x 229 cm

Cinga Samson

Onjalo Umhlola, Onjani Umhlola, 2022

Oil on canvas

150 x 120 cm each

5**Shirin Neshat**

Fervor, 2000

Two black-and-white videos with sound

10 min

6**Rachel Harrison**

Haycation, 2009

Polystyrene, cement, Parex, acrylic, plastic, Buckmaster safety vest, scarf, hay, branches, mosquito head net, lobster, and Rod Laver size 9 Adidas

183 x 86 x 76 cm

Martin Kippenberger

Don't Wake Daddy, 1994

Oil on canvas

240 x 200 cm

Martin Kippenberger

Die Frau ist die gefährlichste Waffe der Wohnung, 1984

Oil on canvas

230 x 184 cm

Jeff Koons

New 100's Merit Ultra-Lights, 1981

Two color Duratrans and fluorescent light boxes

107 x 160 x 20 cm each

Jeff Koons

New Hoover Convertibles, New Shelton Wet/Drys 5-Gallon Doubledecker, 1981–1987

Five vacuum cleaners, acrylic, and fluorescent lights

252 x 137 x 71 cm

Louise Lawler

Michael, 2001

Silver dye bleach print on museum box

152 x 117 cm

Walter Price

The trouble is in us, 2021

Color pencil, wax pencil, screen block tape, graphite, acrylic, and PVC glue on board

102 x 81 cm

Charles Ray

Tractor, 2003–2005

Aluminum

158 x 278 x 137 cm

Wolfgang Tillmans

Concorde L449-19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 1997

Seven inkjet prints on paper mounted on Dibond aluminum in artist's frame

Overall dimensions variable

206 x 145 x 6 cm each

Christopher Wool

Head, 1992

Enamel on aluminum

274 x 183 cm

7

Michael Armitage

Hope, 2017

Oil on Lubug bark cloth

221 x 171 cm

Vanessa Baird

Untitled, 2021

Watercolor on paper

150 x 100 cm

Vanessa Baird

Untitled, 2021

Watercolor on paper

150 x 100 cm

Vanessa Baird

I'M DOWN ON MY KNEES TONIGHT, 2019

Watercolor on paper

150 x 100 cm

Vanessa Baird

Untitled, 2020

Watercolor on paper

150 x 100 cm

Matthew Barney

The Cabinet of Harry Houdini, 1999

Cast nylon, salt, epoxy resin, woven polypropylene, prosthetic plastic, and beeswax

212 x 153 x 185 cm

Matthew Barney

CREMASTER Suite, 1994–2002

Five C-prints in self-lubricating plastic frames

112 x 86 cm each

Bjørn Carlsen

Selv mord, 1978

Oil on canvas

157 x 111 cm

Trisha Donnelly

The Grounding, 2004

Print mounted on aluminum

122 x 121 cm

Nan Goldin

Greer and Robert on the bed, NYC, 1983

C-print

57 x 77 cm

Nan Goldin

Joana and Aurele making out, NYC, 1999

C-print

102 x 70 cm

Damien Hirst

I Feel Love, 1994–1995

Butterflies and household gloss paint on canvas

213 x 213 cm

Damien Hirst

Leukaemia, 2003

Flies and resin on canvas

137 x 102 cm

Klara Lidén

Paralyzed, 2003

Video

3:08 min

Paul McCarthy

Rocky, 1976

Video

21:30 min

Bjarne Melgaard

Untitled, 1997

Oil on canvas

200 x 200 cm

Josh Smith

Untitled (Abstract painting #7), 2007

Oil on canvas

152 x 122 cm

8

Børre Sæthre

My Private Sky, 2001

Stuffed horse, plywood, acrylic panels, stretch ceiling, sliding doors, carpet, chairs, LED lights, lamps, wall foil, and sound

Dimensions variable

9

Robert Gober

Untitled, 2000

Single-color lithograph, printed by Gemini G.E.L.

76 x 112 cm

Robert Gober

Untitled, 2000

Two-color lithographs / two-color screen prints / embossment with hand drawing and erasure, printed by Gemini G.E.L.

76 x 111 cm

Robert Gober

Untitled (functioning sinks), 1992
Stainless steel, painted cast bronze, and water
76 x 71 x 81 cm

Rashid Johnson

Bring Joy, 2012
Black soap and wax
244 x 305 cm

Ann Cathrin November Høibo

Løpere, 2019
Handwoven wool, cotton, nylon, acrylic, and pole
180 x 183 x 5 cm

Frida Orupabo

Untitled, 2019
Collage with paper pins
180 x 175 cm

Frida Orupabo

Woman with gun, 2021
Collage with paper pins mounted on aluminum
150 x 130 cm

Sigmar Polke

Apparizione (1-3), 1992
Synthetic resin and lacquer on polyester
400 x 300 cm each

Thomas Struth

Paradise 4, Daintree, Australia, 1998
C-print
178 x 225 cm

10**Gardar Eide Einarsson**

Untitled (FT), 2017
Cotton flag
200 x 200 cm

Nicole Eisenman

Destiny Riding Her Bike, 2020
Oil on canvas
323 x 267 cm

Jeff Koons

Michael Jackson and Bubbles, 1988
Porcelain
107 x 179 x 83 cm

Ann Cathrin November Høibo

Untitled (36), 2016
Brass, silver, nylon strap, bike lock, nylon, elastic, and rubber
327 x 71 x 10 cm

Albert Oehlen

Untitled, 2011
Oil and paper on canvas
260 x 400 cm

Cindy Sherman

Untitled Film Still, 1979
Gelatin silver print
70 x 87 cm

Cindy Sherman

Untitled Film Still, 1978
Gelatin silver print
70 x 87 cm

11**Allora & Calzadilla**

Clamor, 2006
Mixed media sculpture, six live musicians, six musical instruments, and 40-minute pre-recorded audio
944 x 762 x 305 cm

Matias Faldbakken

Flat box 9, 2011
Cardboard box with print, tape, marker, and ink
84 x 104 cm

Matias Faldbakken

Flat box 2, 2011
Cardboard box with print, tape, marker, and ink
84 x 104 cm

Félix González-Torres

"Untitled" (Blue Placebo), 1991
Candies in blue wrappers, endless supply
Overall dimensions vary with installation

Glenn Ligon

Double America, 2012
Neon and paint
91 x 305 cm

Joar Nango

The same rope that hung you will pull you up in the end, 2020
Bealljit (bent birch trunks), golden copper ring, rope made of reindeer skin, and plastic fibers from a firewood sack
360 x 130 x 25 cm

Gedi Sibony

A Month of Saturday, 2015
Aluminum semi-trailer
234 x 191 cm

12

Paul Chan

6th Light, 2007

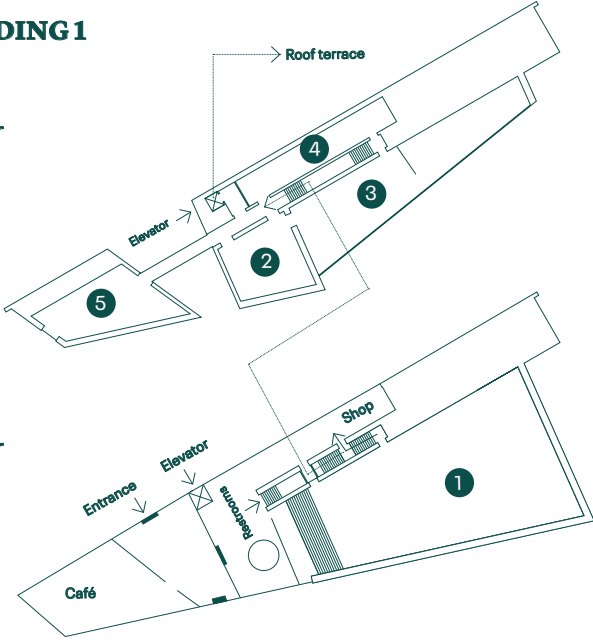
Digital video projection

14 min

Curated by
Owen Martin and
Solveig Øvstebø

BUILDING 1

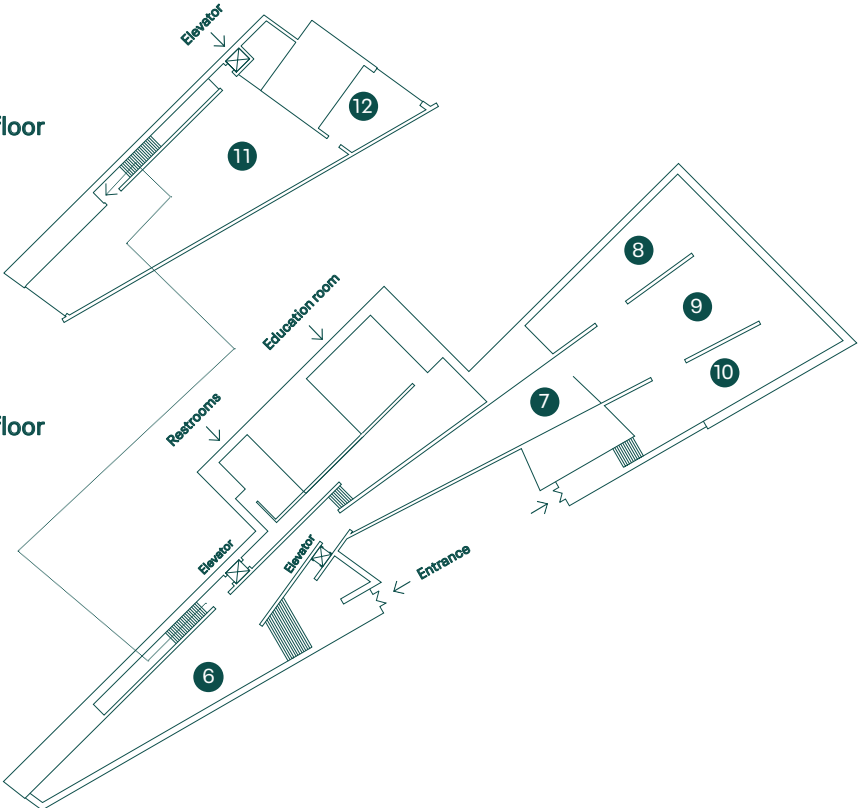
2. floor



1. floor

BUILDING 2

2. floor



1. floor



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THIEF



STADSPORTEN*

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**Astrup
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