

## Sophia Ioannou Gjerding & Mark Tholander

### *Ensembles and Monsters*

Sophia Ioannou Gjerding (b. 1989, DK) and Mark Tholander (b. 1988, DK) are presented together in the exhibition *Ensembles and Monsters*. Inspired by the quote “If categories are unstable, we must watch them emerge within encounters” by the American anthropologist Anna Tsing, it explores how collections and encounters often create assumptions that we take for granted.

The exhibition consists of a series of new productions. In them, Mark Tholander works with performance to explore the identity-creating nature of communities, while Sophia Ioannou Gjerding uses video installation to examine how different collections create narratives.

Various experiences influence how we encounter the world. We are influenced by our interpersonal relationships, through culture, and by what we learned in school or at home. In *Ensembles and Monsters*, both artists explore the so-called baggage we bring with us when we engage with the world around us. In her work, Sophia Ioannou Gjerding begins by exploring how our relationship to other beings are influenced by video games, and in particular how certain video games mirror the act of gathering or foraging, but to the extent to which it becomes hoarding. She then considers different things that we consider to be heritage: first, a spoon from her grandmother, and then inherited knowledge about insects from an entomological collection at the University of Lund (where a large proportion of their specimens were donated by “amateur collectors”). Through this she highlights how, in themselves, collections can direct us and act as storytelling devices.

Mark Tholander looks at the baggage of ideals embedded in communities. Through performance, different roles – ranging from family member to citizen – are explored. An array of actors and musicians allow Tholander to explore how these interpersonal relationships constitute our worldview, and how they change what or who we meet. The concept of “community” is predominantly perceived as positive, but communities have also been used to exclude: cohesion can turn into the othering and alienation of those things that do not fit into what is considered the norm. By using a collective working method to explore social gatherings, Tholander focuses on how, when we move in and out of sync with one another, cohesion can dissolve.

**Curater:** Seolhui Lee, Kunsthall Aarhus

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