

London-based artist Nils Norman (Kent, Great Britain, 1966) works across the disciplines of public art, architecture and urban planning. Norman practises a discipline that has been fittingly labelled ‘urban acupuncture’. In the form of proposals and actual interventions in public spaces he applies pinpricks in order to revitalise urban centres. His projects challenge notions of the function of public art and the efficacy of mainstream urban planning and large-scale regeneration. Norman’s work is informed by ideas about local politics, alternative economic and ecological systems and by play. It merges utopian alternatives with current urban design to create a humorous critique of the discrete histories and functions of public art and urban planning. The exhibition has the character of a retrospective. *Life in the Projects and the Proposals* represents not only Norman’s first solo museum show in the Netherlands but also the first time that such a large grouping of Norman’s works has been brought together in a broad retrospective.

The exhibition begins with the utopian proposals and lateral-thinking models that Norman has developed since the early 1990s. In the form of models, banners, architectural drawings and sculptures Norman initially most often presented plans for greening public places that had come under pressure from political or economic interests. Gradually it became increasingly important in his career for Norman to translate his ideas into actual structures. The first of these life-sized models was the mobile public sculpture *Geocruiser* (2001): a redesigned coach with a greenhouse built into the back and a reading room in the front. In 2006 the artist created a footbridge and artificial islands in Denmark that act as a social meeting ground between the University of Roskilde and the new city Trekroner. Norman gained recognition in the Netherlands with *Edible Park* (2010): a demonstration garden and education centre for permaculture on the edge of the Zuiderpark in The Hague, a project commissioned by Stroom and realised in cooperation with the Permacultuur Centrum Den Haag.

Ideas about play are central in Norman’s work. The exhibition includes a real playground developed by the artist. Visitors are encouraged to actively participate in the exhibition by climbing and crawling and thus to experience the museum space in new ways. Starting from the ideas of the Situationists Norman explores in such architecture the radical potential of play as a form of protest and an expression of freedom. From a basis of thorough historical research and anarchist ideas Norman is currently working on the construction of playgrounds in various European cities.

Education plays an important role in Norman’s activities as an artist. Nils Norman is a professor at the Royal Danish Academy of Art and Design in Copenhagen, where he leads the School of Walls and Space.

The exhibition will be accompanied by an artist book in which Norman for the first time publishes

together the printed work that forms a part of his artistic practice including posters, flyers, invitations and other printed documents. In addition the museum will publish a limited edition print by Norman.

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