

## Press Release

Humlebæk, 19 May 2020

### Press opening

Louisiana invites you to the press opening of the exhibition *Tetsumi Kudo – CULTIVATION*.

Louisiana's director Poul Erik Tøjner will welcome the press.

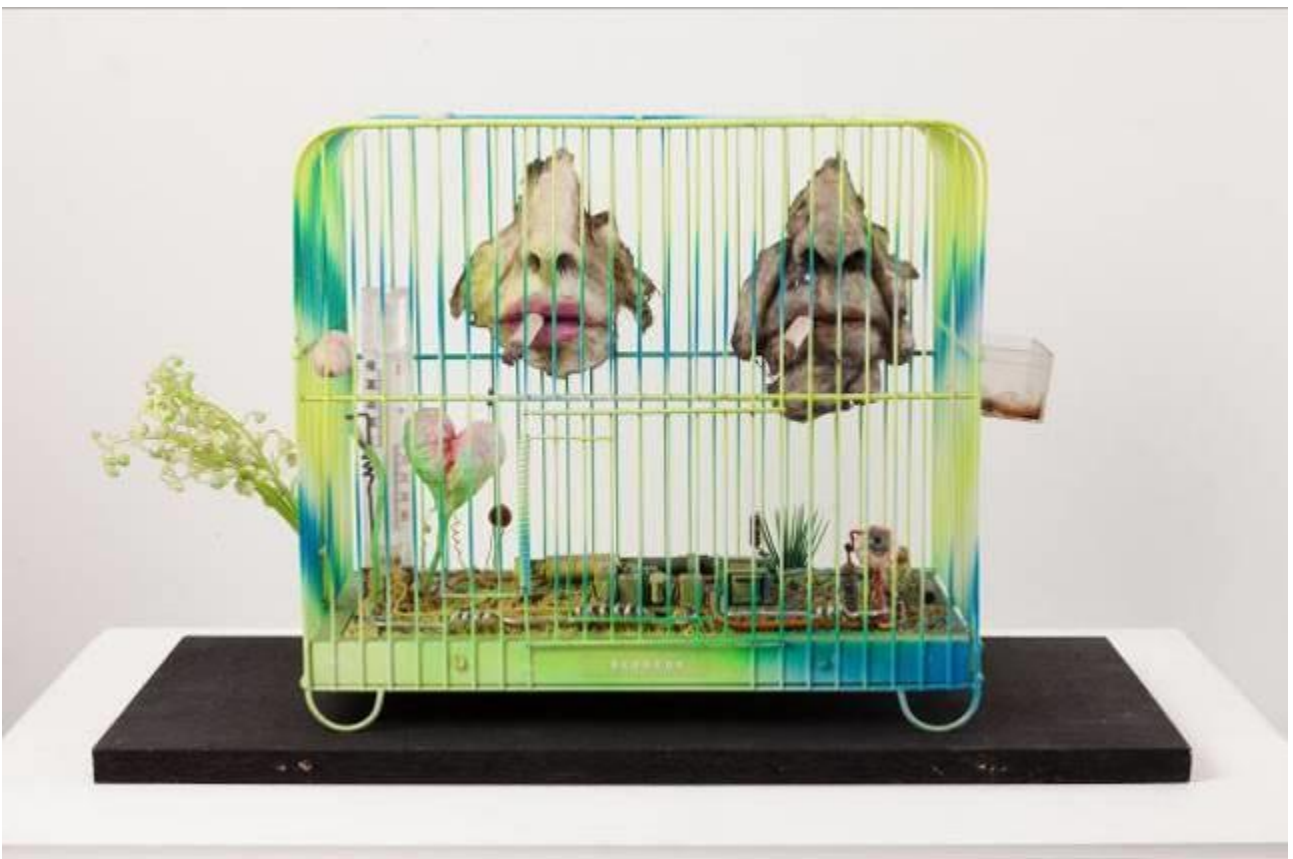
The museum and exhibition curator Tine Colstrup will introduce the exhibition.

After the introduction to the exhibition, the museum invites you to lunch in Louisiana Cafe.

Interviews by appointment.

Time and place: Thursday 4 June at 10:00 a.m. Access by the main entrance.

Registration at: [press@louisiana.dk](mailto:press@louisiana.dk).



*Happiness (Bonheur), 1974. Cage, paint, artificial soil, plastic flowers, cotton, plastic, resin, string, cigarettes, thermometer, Aspro tablets, circuit board.*

*Courtesy of Andrea Rosen Gallery, Photographer: Lance Brewer, © Tetsumi Kudo / Adagp, Paris 2020 / VISDA*

## Tetsumi Kudo

### CULTIVATION

5 June 2020 – 10 January 2021

Japanese Tetsumi Kudo (1935-1990) is currently being rediscovered, yet for many people he will be a new acquaintance when *CULTIVATION* opens at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art. In the exhibition's laboratory of peculiar cultivation environments we can study Kudo's radiantly coloured and grotesque proposals for the cultivation of life in the situation he calls "the new ecology". Kudo's works meet the present with a remarkable relevance and tap into today's environmental, cultural and political agendas – as early formulations of what we today call the anthropocene.

Louisiana's collection includes two striking work assemblages by Kudo, and they form the starting point for the exhibition, which focuses on the artist's production in the 1960s-70s and his visualizations of our new ecology – a self-created swamp of polluted nature, technology and decomposed humanity and humanism.

The apocalyptic post-war experience of the effects of the atom bomb on humans and the environment is a clear point of departure for Kudo. Without sentimentality, he presents mankind's technology-fixated self-destruction and environmental decay. But it is not without absurdity and humour that he thematises how new life can develop.

Kudo combines found materials and modelled elements in his distinctive sculptures. Quite conspicuously, the artist anticipates many of the aesthetic trends found in contemporary art right now, just as he anticipates the present-day penchant for the surreal and grotesque.



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#### Cultivation environments

The exhibition presents approximately 40 works as a concentrated selection of Kudo's various cultivation environments in which we typically encounter bizarre symbioses of body parts, plants and electronic components. In Kudo's words, the works are "visual maquettes" or "models" of our new ecological situation.

In buckets, domes and small experimental gardens we see growth environments with plants and isolated limbs; penises, hearts, eyes, flowers, snails and electronic devices germinate and are fused together in small ecosystems.

The exhibition also gathers a number of Kudo's characteristic cages. Here too we find fragments of nature, electronics and human bodies – or sloughed-off, dried-up and abandoned skins of body fragments. The cages are pet cages as we know them from private homes or pet shops.

In his small but at the same time large world-pictures Kudo wallows in plastic and synthetic materials and not least visualizes the new ecology by means of non-natural materials and fluorescent colours. In the directly 'irradiated' section of the exhibition where the colours glow under ultra-violet light, we find overgrown flowers as well as small, terrarium-like hothouses with carefully conceived, science-fiction-like cultivation experiments with eyes, brains, noses and penises in radioactive environments.

Kudo develops a number of major motifs that we find in various constellations in the works in the exhibition. The penis is Kudo's highly original leitmotif and a multi-faceted symbol – in cocoon-like form a symbol of the transformation potential and the metamorphosis we are constantly undergoing. In other forms, Kudo stages a comical and grotesque deconstruction of phallic dignity and dominance, and in general the penis motif stands as Kudo's symbol of mankind's punctured vitality, potency and control in the new environmental processes we might have started, but no longer quite master.

Tetsumi Kudo was a formative figure on the dynamic Japanese avant-garde scene and in the 'anti-art' currents in Tokyo at the end of the 1950s, until in 1962 he settled in Paris where he had his base for more than 20 years. Kudo's interest in the 'natural' metamorphoses and transformations, of which we are always in the midst, is not only about relations between nature and mankind; it also has a critical, political angle to do with the power and value hierarchies of humanity and culture.

The exhibition is supported by The C.L. David Foundation and Collection.

**Curator:** The exhibition is curated by Louisiana curator Tine Colstrup.

**Catalogue:** An illustrated catalogue is published in English. The catalogue contains an introduction by Tine Colstrup, two of Kudo's own texts and an illustrated biography by American Kudo specialist Joshua Mack.

**Events:** Events and lectures in connection with the exhibition will be announced on an ongoing basis at the museum's website and on Facebook.

**Press photos** can be downloaded at <https://press.louisiana.dk/>. A login can be ordered at e-mail [press@louisiana.dk](mailto:press@louisiana.dk).

**Further information about the exhibition** can be obtained from Curator Tine Colstrup or Head of Press Jan Hybertz Gøricke at [jhg@louisiana.dk](mailto:jhg@louisiana.dk) and +45 2858 5052.

**NB!! Museum opening hours:** Monday-Saturday. 09:00–23:00. Sunday 09:00 –18:00.

**Louisiana website:** [www.louisiana.dk](http://www.louisiana.dk). **Louisiana Channel:** <http://channel.louisiana.dk/>.

Realdania supports Louisiana's architectural exhibitions.

The C.L. David Foundation and Collection supports among other events Louisiana Literature, Louisiana Live and Louisiana on Paper.