

Contemporary art in historical frames at Amalienborg

As part of the refurbishment of the future residence and home of the Crown Prince and the Crown Princess at Amalienborg, ten Danish artists have decorated a number of the official premises at the palace with works of art integrated in the actual building, its rooms, stairways, ceiling artwork, etc. The palace gardens have also been reinterpreted. The project is financed by Realdania.

The ten Danish artists who have decorated the palace are Olafur Eliasson, Signe Guttormsen, Morten Schelde, John Kørner, Eske Kath, Kathrine Ærtebjerg, Kasper Bonnén, Tal R, Erik A. Frandsen and Jesper Christiansen.

“With the art project at Frederik VIII’s Palace, we have resumed a historical tradition for a close interplay between art and architecture which goes further back than Antiquity. An interplay which has been a natural part of history through time, particularly in the important buildings, however, which more or less disappeared at the breakthrough of functionalism in the 1920s,” Hans Peter Svendler, Executive Director at Realdania, says and continues “With the thorough refurbishment of Frederik VIII’s Palace, a possibility of reintroducing the integration of art and structure in one of the most important buildings in the country arose. Fortunately, the Crown Prince couple had the courage to be part of this experiment. The ten artists have expressed themselves through installations, murals and ceiling paintings and in our opinion, their integration of art, architecture, history and present is impressive.”

The decoration of Frederik VIII’s Palace was undertaken in close consultation with the Crown Prince couple who has personally selected the artists invited. The selection of artists was undertaken in compliance with advice from Poul Erik Tøjner, Museum Director of the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art; Mikael Andersen, Gallery Owner; Poul Schülein, Architect; Arkitema and Per Thornit, Chief of the Court. Moreover, the selection of artists and the concept for the works of art are approved by the Heritage Agency of Denmark and the Palaces and Properties Agency which have been responsible for the refurbishment of the palace.

“The challenge has been to leave a contemporary mark on parts of the house in continued consideration of the existing components and the actual choice of a contemporary touch reflects the Royal Family’s own challenge, i.e. to operate on contemporary premises embedded in tradition. The artistic contributions should be considered an integral part, as a gesture reflecting a house which is not a museum for individual work of art, however, a vivid correlation with multiple functions. Several of the artists have appreciated this correlation by using elements of the Crown Prince couple’s history and present while others have related more to the room and aura of the building. The initiative is extraordinary and foresighted as it reflects the necessity of a dialogue with the past,” says Poul Erik Tøjner, Director, the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art.

The decoration has provided the palace with a contemporary mark which will form the settings of many of the Crown Prince couple’s official representation duties. At the same time the decoration reflects both the Crown Prince couple’s commitment to the cultural life in Denmark and the diversity and manifold expression of contemporary art.

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Upon completion of the palace, the architecturally integrated works of art will be donated to the state.

The works of art will be displayed from 27 February to 30 May 2010 where the palace will be open to the public.

The complete renovation of Frederik VIII's Palace and the art and garden project are documented in a book which will be published in the spring of 2010.

The drafts made by the artists in connection with the project are passed on to KØS – Museum of Art in Public Places so that the project can also be presented to the public.

Further information

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Facts

The art and garden project is financed by Realdania with an amount of DKK 22 million.

Museum Director Poul Erik Tøjner, the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, has had an advisory and coordinating function as regards the preparation and implementation of the art project.

The ten selected Danish artists who have decorated the palace are:

Olafur Eliasson, Signe Guttormsen, Morten Schelde, John Kørner, Eske Kath, Kathrine Ærtebjerg, Kasper Bonnén, Tal R, Erik A. Frandsen and Jesper Christiansen.

The gardens are designed by Landscape Architect Jacob Fischer.

The enclosed overview of the palace demonstrates the position of the various artists' works of art.

Besides the creation of new art for the palace and the new gardens, the restoration and preservation of a number of paintings, chandeliers and tapestries associated with the palace and which are owned by the state are also included. Special mention should be made of a line of quite unique paintings by the Danish flower painter J.L. Jensen painted in 1827-28 for one of the rooms in the bel étage of the palace.

The works of art will be displayed from 27 February to 30 May 2010 where the palace will be open to the public.

Concurrently with this, KØS – Museum of Art in Public Places, located in Køge – will be exhibiting "Kunst til de kongelige" (art for the royal) from 10 March 2010. At the exhibition, sketches and models from the artists will be displayed and the individual artists will be interviewed and films will be produced in collaboration with DR (the Danish national TV).

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The exhibition also gives an insight into the special restoration technical challenges in connection with the refurbishment of Frederik VIII's Palace.

Finally, the complete renovation of Frederik VIII's Palace and the art and garden project will be documented in a book which will be published in the spring of 2010.