

Spring Fever


This season, spectacular lawsuits are held in the name of art, the Danish gallery scene is stirring, and women are an enduring trend.


By Pernille Albrethsen 21.01.22 The Art Season Artikel på dansk



Dorothy Iannone is on view at Louisiana in the late Spring. Dorothy Iannone, *Flora And Fauna*, 1973. Color silk-screen on paper © Hans-Georg Gaul Courtesy Dorothy Iannone, Peres Project and Air de Paris.

While the Danish art scene cannot quite match the sheer amount of commissions, impeachment trials, and charges against politicians and officials that have washed over Danish politics in recent years, it still seems as if the nation's art has gone litigious, too. This spring offers no less than two spectacular cases where legal wrangling has entered the art world.

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The North Jutland museum Kunsten has just opened legal proceedings in the case of Jens Haaning's work *Take the Money and Run* (2021). The museum wants Haaning to return the half a million Danish kroner it loaned to the artist for materials in a planned work – one that Haaning subsequently converted into a new work that involved him quite literally taking the money and running. The exhibition featuring this work came to a close last weekend, which is why the museum set Monday as the cut-off

date for getting its money back. When that didn't happen, the museum filed a civil lawsuit against the artist.

Another case grinding its way through the machinery of law this spring is the so-called "bust case," where a criminal case has been filed. Artist and former head of department at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts Kathrine Dirckinck-Holmfeld stands accused of having, alongside a number of students, taken a plaster cast of king Frederik V (1746–1766) from the academy's assembly hall and thrown it into the waters of the Port of Copenhagen. According to the indictment, the students acted inadvertently and unintentionally, but Dirckinck-Holmfeld, who was suspended from her position following the action, may be facing a sentence for gross vandalism.

It's always a little boring when art is defined in courtrooms and lawyers have to read up on conceptualism. The outcome is often arbitrary and, from an artistic perspective, uninteresting. But sometimes these things are difficult to avoid.

One place in Copenhagen has a particularly long-standing tradition of taking an alternative view of the letter of the law: Freetown Christiania, a commune which has, over the last fifty years, made many efforts to opt out of Danish society. One example is the introduction of its own currency in 1975 – called '1 fed' (1 joint), because the value of each coin was to correspond to one gramme of hash. Rooted in Christiania, the curatorial enterprise Det Kosmiske Hierarki (The Cosmic Hierarchy) has created an exhibition at Den Frie in Copenhagen showcasing these beautiful coins, all of which were made by the engraver Vagn Sorento Dichmann.

Insofar as a single persistent trend in Danish art can be said to continue this spring, it would have to be "women." In the autumn of 2021, the National Gallery of Denmark showed *After the Silence – Women of Art Speak Out*. Now, Arken gives us *Women and Change*, which "homes in on 150 years of various representations of women and gender in art," from Marie Krøyer by way of Guerrilla Girls to Cajsja von Zeipel.

Arken is also currently in the spotlight for less uplifting reasons: abuse of power and abusive behaviour. A group of anonymous employees at Arken recently sent a complaint to the management and the board lamenting the poor working climate at the museum. This quickly prompted the dismissal of an employee, and the board has promised a major clean-up after a survey described in the newspaper Politiken earlier this week showed that 50 per cent of Arken's employees have witnessed colleagues being subjected to abusive behaviour within the last eighteen months.



Laure Prouvost, *We Will Feed You Together Fountain (For Global Warming)*, 2019 (detailje). © Laure Prouvost, Courtesy Lisson Gallery. Part of Arken's *Women and Change* opening early February.

The National Gallery isn't doing too well either. In a recent workplace survey, one-third of the employees expressed dissatisfaction with the management and complained about an insufficient focus on the work environment. Director Mikkel Bøgh has promised swift action, but also said, in a comment to the online newspaper Altinget, that "it will require a long and steady haul for a museum with so many deeply embedded and inherited patterns of work."

This season's major exhibition at the National Gallery features Haegue Yang. It looks set to be a kind of retrospective presenting works from 1994 until today, but at the same time appears to form part of an ongoing series where artists are invited to respond to the museum as an institution, as Astrup & Bordorff did in the autumn. At any rate, Yang will show a new "sculpture duo" inspired by two artists in the museum's collection, Pia Arke and Sonja Ferlov Mancoba.

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The spring at Louisiana is rich in solo shows, including exhibitions featuring Diane Arbus, Sonia Delaunay, and Forensic Architecture. I particularly look forward to the one starring the now 90-year-old Dorothy Iannone, whose exuberant and mythological imagery is as autobiographical as it is effervescent with baroque embellishments, Icelandic sagas, and Indian tantra. I'm sure it will be most becoming for the old villa by the Sound.

In Copenhagen, things are stirring a bit on the gallery scene. One of the most important gallerists of the 2000s is making a comeback: Christina Wilson, who ran a gallery under her own name from 2002 to 2012, has just opened Gas9Gallery in the Vesterbro district. The first exhibition features Hannah Heilmann, and the list of associated artists sports new and mainly Danish names, including Maiken Bent, Kim Richard Adler Mejldahl, and Ida Sønder Thorhauge.

Andersen's has had several addresses in Copenhagen since its inception in 2004, and the venue is now relocating yet again. In future, the gallery will no longer be next door to the Queen's palace, having opted instead for premises near the galleries Nils Stærk and Nicolai Wallner in the Northwest District, where Christian Andersen was also located until recently. The latter now shares an address with Bianca D'Alessandro at Frederiksholms Kanal. In Nørrebro, the same model has been adopted by Lagune Ouest, which now shares its showrooms with Vermilion Sands.

At the end of March, the former will present a solo show featuring Asta Lynge, a figure frequently seen on Copenhagen's independent scene during the past few years. Andersen's new premises will be inaugurated next week with a show featuring a new face in the gallery, Oxford-based artist Samson Kambalu, who will take over London's Trafalgar Square this autumn with his winning project for this year's Fourth Plinth.



In 1975 the Copenhagen freetown Christiania introduced own currency – called '1 fed' (1 joint), because the value of each coin was to correspond to one gramme of hash. Photo of "1 fed" in silver, 1976. 2,74 cm.

In Aarhus, new directors have taken over at the city's two most important institutions: Diana Baldon at Kunsthall Aarhus and Rebecca Mathews at ARoS Art Museum. We have yet to see how the new names at the top will be reflected in the most important aspect of all, the exhibition programmes.

As yet, Kunsthall Aarhus has extended *Go Extreme*, the venue's major autumn exhibition where art and extreme sports mix and mingle, into the first three months of the year. It will be followed by solo shows featuring Manon de Boer and Shitamichi Motoyuki, respectively, who were also already in the programme prior to the change in leadership.

ARoS begins the season with a presentation of the light artist Viera Collaro, followed by *Vertigo*, an exhibition bringing together a group of artists who all "strive to create a fluid space that evokes the feeling of vertigo." Cao Fei, Trisha Baga, and Ann Lislegaard are among the artists mentioned.

We can probably also expect a bit of vertigo from Museum Jorn in Silkeborg, where Jørgen Michaelsen's *Dry-Wet-Comfort* has just opened. Based on Asger Jorn's philosophy of "trialectics," Michaelsen has constructed an apparatus for translating thought into reality – a device that can be used in the production of art. Examples of the thinking machine's function as well as its historical background are reportedly part of the exhibition, which sounds like classic Michaelsen.

One of this spring's exhibitions at Kunsthall Charlottenborg sounds rather more unpredictable, but in promising ways. *The New Red Order* is described as an "open secret society with various members." The main forces behind the show are Adam Khalil, Zack Khalil, and Jackson Polys, who, among other things, will "confront the colonial structures and promote the future of indigenous peoples."

Less than a week has passed since Danish art venues and museums were allowed to once again welcome visitors after another Covid lockdown was enforced in mid-December. Perhaps that is why everything still feels a bit tentative and doddering, with lawsuits and bad working environments taking up far too much attention. Hopefully, things will look different when we see each other at a vernissage sometime this spring.



This season's major exhibition at the National Gallery features Haegue Yang. Haegue Yang, *Sonic Intermediate - Tripodal Shapeshifter after Ferlov Mancoba*, 2021.