

MUDAM

An exhibition in three parts

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A Model

09.02 — 08.09.2024

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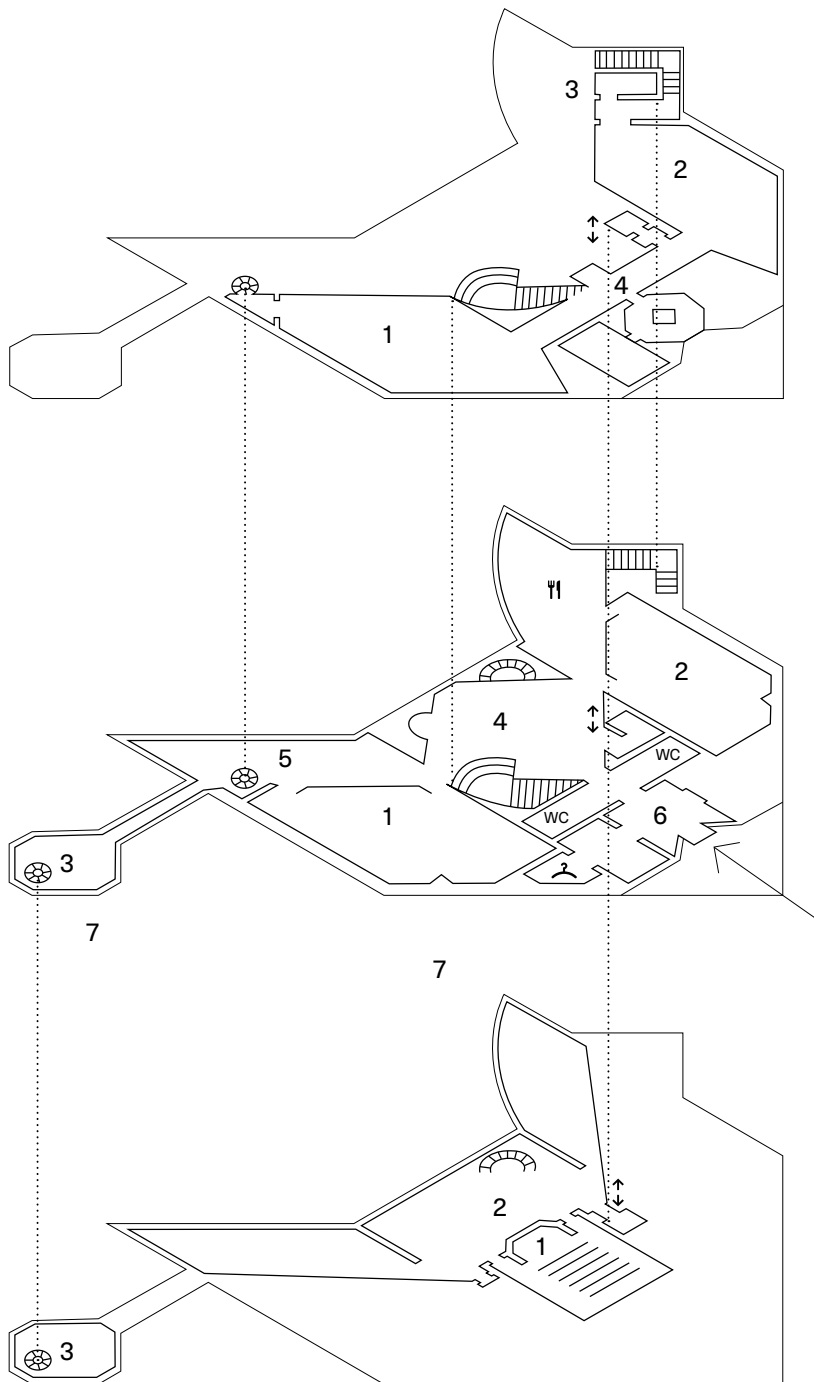
09.02 — 08.09.2024

Curators:

Bettina Steinbrügge with Sarah Beaumont,
Clément Minighetti and Joel Valabrega



Palle Nielsen, *Modellen*, 1968, Moderna Museet, Stockholm
Photo: Moderna Museet, Stockholm



Level +1

1. East Gallery — Nina Beier and Bob Kil | General Idea
2. West Gallery — Anna Boghiguan | Andrea Bowers | Daniela Ortiz | Krista Belle Stewart
3. Small West Gallery — Listening Station
4. Hallway — Palle Nielsen
- Various locations — Tony Cokes | Jason Dodge | Finnegan Shannon | Dardan Zhegrova

Level 0

1. East Gallery — Tomaso Binga | Nora Turato
2. West Gallery — Isaac Julien
3. Henry J. and Erna D. Leir Pavilion — Rayyane Tabet (until 12 May 2024)
4. Grand Hall — Oscar Murillo | Screening Programme
5. Jardin des Sculptures — Claire Fontaine | Su-Mei Tse
6. Entry Hall — Tony Cokes | Finnegan Shannon
7. Park Dräi Eechelen — Nina Beier | Finnegan Shannon
- Various locations — Tony Cokes | Jason Dodge | Finnegan Shannon | Dardan Zhegrova

Level -1

1. Auditorium
2. Foyer
3. Henry J. and Erna D. Leir Pavilion — Rayyane Tabet (until 12 May 2024)

Introduction

A Model is an exhibition that puts forward a reflection on the role of the museum at the beginning of the twenty-first century. It affirms the need to think of the institution as a living place, sensitive and receptive to contemporary debates and reaching beyond its status as simply a space for display. *A Model* contemplates the possibilities that arise when museum collections are re-imagined as active and performative environments, rather than timeless repositories of objects.

A Model is also about the potential of art having critical impact on the world and how artists exert their commitment to this potential through their work. Even as an artist's vision is subjective and personal, art objects or manifestations are vital forms of communication. The idea of the museum as a static archive – a conception inherited from the Enlightenment – is upended in today's cultural context in which durational, event-based and experimental artworks, exhibitions and experiences are part of the institutional language.

The museum has to take into account changes and rethink beliefs that have been taken for granted. Today, the landscape is changing, from a renewed approach to diversity within institutions, to rethinking existing and deeply anchored narratives and in turn rewriting history to re-establish cultures or practices hitherto overlooked or ignored. The recent pandemic also changed behaviours: the social media feedback loops and the constantly improving visual technologies are amplifying our relation to information and the realities of the world we live in.

This drive to rethink and reinvent itself is nothing new in the development of the modern and contemporary art museum. This exhibition was in part inspired by the project of the artist and activist Palle Nielsen, entitled *The Model – A Model*

for a Qualitative Society. It was presented in 1968 at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, then led by Pontus Hultén, who contributed considerably to redefine the museum in his time. Nielsen's project consisted in the installation of an adventure playground inside the museum, freely accessible to all children to a wide range of play functions and activities. It was open for three weeks and attracted more than 33,500 visitors, 20,000 of whom were children (adults paid a normal entrance fee).

A Model echoes this regenerating spirit in its desire to renew the museum's commitment to contemporary art. It marks the beginning of new ways of thinking about how art is displayed and thought of, by placing the Mudam Collection as the point of departure of a temporary exhibition. The latter brings together international artists whose practice critically reflects on museum institutions; some through new commissions and some inspired by and in dialogue with works from the collection. *A Model* is a testament to the role artists have in shaping collective awareness and their influence on the shaping of the contemporary art museum.

This exhibition is the second chapter of *A Model*, a three-part project that unfolds from 1 December 2023 to 8 September 2024. It follows *A Model: Prelude – Rayyane Tabet. Trilogy* and will be concluded by *A Model: Epilogue – Jason Dodge. Tomorrow, I walked to a dark black star*.

1. Arena

Level 0
Grand Hall

Artist

Oscar Murillo

Screening programme

Sophia Al-Maria
Ingrid Brochard
Ali Cherri
Tony Cokes
Nayla Dabaji
María Jerez and Edurne Rubio
Marysia Lewandowska
Renzo Martens
Melvin Moti
Oscar Murillo
Khandakar Ohida
Walid Raad

In Roman antiquity, the arena was the central enclosed area within the amphitheatre where men and animals engaged in combat. Today, the arena is an environment for public entertainment, a place for people to come together. Oscar Murillo's installation at Mudam's Grand Hall takes shape as a social arena, a place where visitors can sit, reflect, meet and activate the museum. Dressed in utilitarian uniforms, the effigies occupying the installation reference a global working class. Murillo regards these figures as proxies that empower and cultivate recognition for this community in contexts where they are often inadequately represented. Seated in the artist's amphitheatre-like set-up, Murillo's effigies face a large screen, their expression showcasing a sense of captivation by what's projected on it: an artists' film programme and documentaries on the very idea of the museum. Murillo's installation presents a social space, where visitors and effigies meet, and one that raises questions about audiences present in museum contexts. Through this encounter, Murillo proposes the museum to be a place of solidarity, where diversity can be experienced. It is from this aspirational notion that the installation takes its name: *collective conscience* (2015–ongoing).

Oscar Murillo (b. 1986, La Paila, Colombia) works across painting, drawings, installation, sculpture, performance, along with collaborative projects and videos. His work communicates a nuanced interpretation of the specific conditions of globalisation and its attendant state of flux. At Mudam, the artist's work *collective conscience* sets out to alter the typical relationship between museum and visitor, encouraging audiences to interact, share and exchange. Bodies are political – they carry history, social position, identity and spaces. In this respect, Murillo's social

arena proposes a sense of freedom which, if only for a moment, allows for interpersonal encounters that convey a sense of unity among visitors and effigies. As the combined audiences look toward the screen, films showcasing unique perspectives on the museum institution are projected. This film programme presents the museum not just as a building, but as a space that can be shared and dreamt.

In *Dream Your Museum* (2022), Khandakar Ohida (b. 1993, Kelepara, Hooghly, India) tells the story of her uncle, Khandakar Selim, who meticulously collected a multitude of objects in his house for forty-seven years. Through its items, this 'non-institutional museum' raises questions on what a decolonial museum can be in a once colonised landscape, and where the accumulation of objects ends and a museum collection begins. Nayla Dabaji's film *Migrer le musée* (2021), shot at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, showcases the artist temporarily inhabiting the museum space. As Dabaji 'moves in', the museum becomes a vessel for the artist's personal collection of images, offering a counterpoint to the alternative and domestic museum shown in Ohida's film.

Parisian museums provided the setting for *Somniculus* (2017) by Ali Cherri (b. 1976, Beirut). Shot after hours, when the collections are 'resting' away from the visitors' gaze, the film proposes a narrative tension between the life of artefacts and the living world around them. Cherri's film asks, 'what would a museum be without artworks?' In *No Show* (2004), Melvin Moti (b. 1977, Rotterdam) revives a guided tour at the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, whose collections were evacuated during the Second World War. Only the memory of the works remains and depending on the point of view of the tour guide, the ideological discourse they might serve becomes clear.

Marysia Lewandowska (b. 1955, Szczecin, Poland), with *Rehearsing the Museum* (2018) and Sophia Al-Maria (b. 1983, Tacoma, Washington), with *TIGER STRIKE RED* (2022), take a critical look at how museum collections in the West are built upon the theft and retrieval of non-Western artefacts, immersing the audience into narratives around colonial violence and its ramifications. Lewandowska's film addresses also the Western concept of public function of the museum in relationship to the private interests represented by real estate development specific to China. In *Les Louvres: Sections 7, 11 and 17* (2019), Walid Raad (b. 1967, Chbaniyeh, Lebanon) documents what happened behind the scenes at a time when the Louvre Museum was undergoing large changes with the creation of the Department of Islamic Arts and the Louvre Abu Dhabi. In the TED talk 'Comment j'ai créé un musée d'art contemporain mobile et gratuit' (2018), Ingrid Brochard discusses the origins and reason of her mobile museum, Mumo, created in 2011. Museums, as ubiquitously conceptualised between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the West, are called into question by artists' political and poetic reflections. María Jerez's (b. 1978, Madrid) and Edurne Rubio's (b. 1974, Burgos) film *Maria Gaat Naar School* (2017), showcases schoolchildren who are tasked with collectively teaching an adult. *White Cube* (2020) by Renzo Martens (b. 1973, Terneuzen, Netherlands) or *B4 & After the Studio Pt. 2 (Everythingism)* (2019) by Tony Cokes (b. 1956, Richmond, Virginia) analyse the economic structures in which artists and the art world in the West operate, and demonstrate that art has not lost its ability to influence the world.

Finally, we come back to Oscar Murillo with his video work *collision of intent (Diego Rivera, Rockefeller Center)* (2019) that

shows a performance in which museum staff volunteers are pushing the effigies on rolling office chairs from The Shed to the Rockefeller Center in New York. Murillo sought a dialogue with Diego Rivera's historically controversial mural, *The fresco Man at the Crossroads* (1934), censored due to its anti-capitalist sentiments.

Oscar Murillo's arena *collective conscience* activates *A Model* and highlights the social role of the exhibition by making itself a space for discussion and exchange, like a forum, as a site for broad audiences to come together.



Oscar Murillo, *collision of intent (Diego Rivera, Rockefeller Center)*, 2019, as part of *Collision/Coalition*, The Shed, New York, USA, 19 June – 25 August 2019
Photo: Mohamed Sadek © Oscar Murillo. Courtesy of the artist and The Shed

2. Crossroads

Level 0
Level +1
Park Dräi Eechelen

Artists

Nina Beier
Tony Cokes
Finnegan Shannon
Dardan Zhegrova

Exhibiting art in Mudam's transitory and outdoor spaces, *A Model* offers visitors a series of chance encounters, inviting audiences to explore new ways of engaging with the museum at its crossroads. Taking place between one exhibition space and the next, various installations, sculptures, videos and archival materials are presented, including documentation on Palle Nielsen's 1968 exhibition *The Model* at Stockholm's Moderna Museet from which this exhibition takes its cue.

Nina Beier's (b. 1975, Aarhus, Denmark) *Guardians* (2022) at Park Dräi Eechelen consists of five found guardian lions hosting birdseeds in the negative spaces of the carved marble around each lion's mouth, mane, and muscles. Spread out below the trees of the Park Dräi Eechelen surrounding Mudam, the sculptures now offer themselves to the winged residents of the park. Lion figures, like Beier's *Guardians*, typically mark the entrance of a public institution and are often looked at from below. Subverting the presentation of monuments as fallen icons highlights how a museum and its site are not neutral and asks visitors to reconsider their associations with kingly valour or wisdom. Through the presence of the sculptures, Beier's *Guardians* also reveals how a symbolic object can be destabilised, and that its meaning is in constant flux.

Finnegan Shannon's (b. 1989, Berkeley, California) seating interventions *Do you want us here or not (Mudam)* (2023–ongoing) call attention to the limited conditions of accessibility, inclusivity and comfort that public and museum spaces offer. Shannon's practice focuses on the perception of disability, informed by the artist's personal experience of living with disability since birth. At the entrance of the museum, Shannon softens the *Lobby* (2006) bench by Martin Szekely (b. 1956, Paris), already present in the museum, with

cobalt-blue cushions (*Bench-to-daybed conversion research*, 2024), whilst inside and outside the museum, the seating structures, commissioned by Mudam, address audiences in English, French, German and Luxembourgish. Shannon's spatial interventions invite visitors to sit down and reflect on possible biases and the need for greater social diversity, while underlining the importance of one's physical experience of space, even preceding the sensorial one.

Extending into Mudam's lobby, Tony Cokes's (b. 1956, Richmond, Virginia) *Evil.80.Empathy?* (2020) is presented upon visitors' entry to the museum. Cokes's video work exemplifies the necessity for museum spaces to reflect in relation to contemporary movements and debates, triggering widespread reconsiderations of institutional and systemic modes of operation. Created in the wake of the 2020 George Floyd protests across the world, *Evil.80.Empathy?* presents edited extracts of an online conversation held on 18 June, 2020 between artist and filmmaker John Akomfrah, Black feminist theorist and Professor of Humanities Tina Campt and writer and academic of African American studies and Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Saidiya Hartman. Cokes uses colour, font style and linguistic repetition to present fragments of this conversation which, paired with the rhythmic drums of a soundtrack by producer and DJ Caspa, underline notions of empathy and complicity in relation to police brutality and systemic violence against Black people. The video concludes with a poignant statement: 'We have witnessed enough Black death for a lifetime...'

Dardan Zhegrova's (b. 1991, Pristina) installations *Your enthusiasm to tell a story (gold)* (2016) and *Your enthusiasm to tell a story (blue)* (2017) are presented at Mudam to convey a sense of unexpected yearning

among audiences. Dardan Zhegrova is an artist and activist whose practice revolves around LGBTQIA+ rights, objects and performances, often integrating fabrics and using poetry as a point of departure. Of Kosovan origin, Zhegrova attended the Dodona Puppet Theater as a child, which continues to stand as a symbol of Albanian cultural resistance and emancipation in Kosovo. Encountered by chance, the dolls of *Your enthusiasm to tell a story* invite visitors to physically engage with them. To hear the dolls whisper – nostalgic notes on longing for intimate relationships – one must lay their heads on their chests, so as to let their 'hearts talk to you'. Within each of Zhegrova's dolls resides a non-discriminatory poem, unfolding as a personal narrative dedicated to non-gendered relationships. *Your enthusiasm to tell a story* sets out to blur boundaries between the artist's personal experience and that of visitors.

and therefore,
I must act."

Tony Cokes, *Evil.80.Empathy?*, 2020
Courtesy of the artist, Greene Naftali, New York, Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles, Felix Gaudlitz, Vienna, and Electronic Arts Intermix, New York



Nina Beier and Bob Kil, *All Fours*, 2022
Performance view, La Pista 500, Pinacoteca Agnelli, Turin, 2022
Photo: Sebastiano Pellin di Persano | Courtesy of the artists, Standard (Oslo), Oslo and Croy Nielsen, Vienna

3. The Model – Palle Nielsen

Level +1

Artists

Palle Nielsen
SUPERFLEX

The starting point for *A Model* is a project by the artist and activist Palle Nielsen. In 1968, Nielsen was given a carte blanche by the Moderna Museet in Stockholm to organise *The Model – A Model for a Qualitative Society*, a social experiment in which 20,000 children were offered a recreational space inside the museum. For nearly one month, the museum became a playground where children could freely jump off a bridge, swing in tyres, make objects with craft tools, climb on swings, paint and use a record player to listen to music. In its time, *The Model* proposed transforming the museum into a playful space, conducive to creativity and freedom, suggesting that such a principle could be transposed to society as a whole. The exhibition at Mudam echoes this regenerative spirit in its desire to question the role of the museum institution today, and to propose a model, another way to conceive exhibitions that considers the contemporary debates of our time. Archives relating to Palle Nielsen's original project are presented in a dedicated space in the museum's first-floor corridor.

The Model – A Model for a Qualitative Society presented at Moderna Museet was a continuation of other projects Nielsen had developed in Copenhagen in the second half of the 1960s. In 1966, while still a painting student at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, from which he graduated in 1967, Palle Nielsen convinced the architect of the municipality of Gladsaxe, a suburb of Copenhagen, to hire him as an artistic consultant. Aware of the critical need for public play areas in urban Denmark in the 1950s and into the 1960s, a time when schools did not consider the creativity of children as a priority, he dedicated himself to producing what he called 'spatial formations for children'. He drew on experiments demonstrating that the presence of groups of children and the intensity of their play increased when play areas were denser and featured recesses

and elevated viewpoints, rather than large open spaces. Based on these principles, he designed a 5,000 m² play area described as an adventure playground. Opening in autumn 1968, it comprised suspension bridges, slides and open-air playhouses, offering a variety of possibilities for play, but with limited equipment, as it was intended above all to be a place where children felt free to be rowdy and experiment. Then, in March 1968, Palle Nielsen's approach turned to the streets. With a group of activists, he set up illegal playgrounds in the gardens of a working-class neighbourhood in a Copenhagen suburb. Together, they got the permission of residents to build playgrounds in their backyards. This was a way for Palle Nielsen and his colleagues to provide constructive criticism of the city's urban planning policy, while also denouncing social inequity.

In June 1968, Palle Nielsen travelled to Stockholm to help organise actions aiming to thwart an unbridled urban development that had forgotten what was essential: people. During these meetings, Nielsen proposed to take over a cultural institution because, in his view, it was important to use new communication channels to make an impact on decision-makers and public opinion.

His idea was not well received, as to the counterculture of the time, all institutional spaces were conformist. But not for the director of the Moderna Museet, Pontus Hultén, who recognised the value of the project and extended Nielsen a carte blanche. With *The Model – A Model for a Qualitative Society*, the project he developed for the museum, Nielsen's intention was twofold. First, he wanted to create a setting in which children could express themselves without constraint and imagine a world of their own, rather than imitating that of adults. Without any pre-established rules, this space was meant as a first step towards

a more collective society that favoured communication between individuals and had no ties to capitalist productivism. Nielsen's intentions also focused on art and museum institutions. If art was to free itself from being in a bourgeois rut, it had to become a vehicle for social change. As for the museum, it should both be a place of social emancipation and a platform to make voices heard. In a text from 2013, Palle Nielsen said: 'I wanted to deconstruct "the white cube" of an art museum [...] The idea of an art museum was to be changed by the live presence of active, playing children in the museum.' *The Model* existed somewhere between educational project, artistic installation, and socio-political statement.

A contemporary form of this activism can be seen in the projects of the artist collective SUPERFLEX, who also open up public spaces for all generations. As part of *A Model*, their project *Research for Sculptural Infrastructure* will focus on the sustainable outdoor activation of the museum.



Palle Nielsen, *Modellen*, 1968, Moderna Museet, Stockholm
Photo: Moderna Museet, Stockholm

4. Modernisms

Level 0
West Gallery

Artist

Isaac Julien

André Holland – Alain Locke
Danny Huston – Albert Barnes
Devon Terrell – Richmond Barthé
Sharlene Whyte – Curator
Special appearance by
Alice Smith

Commissioned by the Barnes Foundation and the Ford Foundation, with additional support from the Sharjah Art Foundation, Linda Pace Foundation, Carol Weinbaum, and the University of California, Santa Cruz

Once Again... (Statues Never Die) (2022) by Isaac Julien (b. 1960, London) at Mudam's West Gallery is a five-screen installation shown with traditional African objects, alongside works by sculptors (James) Richmond Barthé (b. 1901, Bay Saint Louis – d. 1989, Pasadena) and Matthew Angelo Harrison (b. 1989, Detroit). Julien's installation illustrates the sensitive, intellectual relationship between the history of art and cultural ownership. In *Once Again... (Statues Never Die)*, the artist establishes a dialogue between the art collector and founder of the Barnes Foundation, Albert C. Barnes (b. 1872, Philadelphia – d. 1951, Phoenixville, Pennsylvania) and the philosopher and cultural critic Alain Locke (b. 1885, Philadelphia – d. 1954, New York), known as the father of the Harlem Renaissance, the cultural revival of African American art, politics and scholarship in Harlem, New York City during the early twentieth-century.

Julien's *Once Again... (Statues Never Die)* explores the history of the reception of African art into the West. This is illustrated by the artistic and intellectual avant-garde of the West of the early twentieth-century that drew inspiration from the aesthetic power of African art to explore new modes of representation, as seen in the work of European artists such as André Derain (b. 1880, Chatou, France – d. 1954, Garches, France) to Pablo Picasso (b. 1881, Malaga – d. 1973, Mougins, France) to Henri Matisse (b. 1869, Le Cateau-Cambrésis, France – d. 1954, Nice). However, this period was simultaneously shaped by colonisation and racial prejudice, resulting, often so, in the exploitation and appropriation of African culture by the West. As Isaac Julien explains, *Once Again... (Statues Never Die)* can be read as 'a form of poetic restitution of thinking about that as a question and thinking about the nature of how works arrived here and what that encounter means in terms of how we look

at them today' in relationship to questions of restitutions of African objects.

Mixing poetic fiction and reality, the installation interweaves eras and results in a multi-screen film that span the twentieth century until present day. *Once Again... (Statues Never Die)* portrays Barnes and Locke, while introducing a fictional character, a contemporary African curator. Through this dialogue, Julien draws parallels between different periods, while presenting the awakening of colonial awareness through art. This is manifested through Locke's 1925 seminal publication *The New Negro* – an anthology on African and African American art, in which the author calls for a radical change in African American culture, and for the liberatory emancipation of people. As such, Locke states that art and culture are essential links in this process, wherein culture is heritage, and new art can reinvigorate this heritage. For Locke, art's power in conveying a cultural identity can, through its recognition and dissemination, fight racial discrimination and promote social justice.

Isaac Julien's installation expands on the idea of reinstating African art to its rightful place in history by focusing, above all, on the future. The presence of sculptures by Richmond Barthé and Matthew Angelo Harrison, two artists a century apart, attests to the continuity, vibrancy and originality of Black culture – from the Harlem Renaissance to the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and 1970s and contemporary Afrofuturism, which explores themes of memory, identity (and in particular, post-colonial identity) and political aesthetics. This affirmation is a necessary political act, which the artist makes clear through the voice of the singer Alice Smith: 'Once again, I defend my open heart, no question. And all my old ways, bad old days, pass me by like the weather.' While Julien acknowledges the prejudice inflicted upon Africa and

its richness of cultures, he demonstrates above all that art regenerates itself and that each generation, through remembrance, produces new thoughts and values.

Today, museum discourse must include considerations on how to repair institutional harm and rewrite history. Beyond the actual restitution of works whose presence in Western museum collections are often the result of colonial plundering, the lost memory of these artefacts must also be addressed. How can the original meaning of uprooted and appropriated art be restored when the cultures that produced them are suffering from colonisation and appropriation?



Once Again... (Statues Never Die), 2022
Installation view, Tate Britain, London, 2023
Photo: Jack Hems | © Isaac Julien
Courtesy of the artist and Victoria Miro

5. Translations

Level 0
Jardin des Sculptures

Artists

Claire Fontaine
Su-Mei Tse

Presented together in the Jardin des Sculptures, Claire Fontaine's installation *Become a Sea* (2023) and Su-Mei Tse's *Many Spoken Words* (2009) combines two ideas of a fountain in a space that is transformed into an enclosed southern courtyard by a tile-like printed floor that mimics the consumed and stratified Mediterranean ceramic surface. Invited to respond to the iconic work in Mudam's collection, Claire Fontaine (b. 2004, Paris) weaves the already charged meaning of Su-Mei Tse's (b. 1973, Luxembourg) work into a reflection of our times in all its complexity.

Installed in Mudam's Jardin des Sculptures in 2009, *Many Spoken Words* is a fountain whose water has been replaced by deep black ink. It flows from the basin held by a baroque-inspired cherub, and produces a gentle sound that fills the space. Su-Mei Tse's work is a tribute to literature, to poetry, to the infinite potential of words. According to the artist, it represents 'the whole process of language: the way an initial thought goes from spoken word to written text'. The fluidity of the material refers to the very act of creation itself, to the idea of the source of inspiration, but it also alludes to the fluctuating nature of language. Indeed, languages are regularly reassessed and expanded to reflect changes in the societies that use them. They can be both a weapon and a poetic escape. In a publication containing various sources for her work, Su-Mei Tse recalls her correspondence with Raymond Delambre, in which he referred to the writer and poet Lin Zhao (b. 1931, Suzhou, China – d. 1968, Shanghai), who was sentenced to twenty years in prison by the Chinese Communist Party in 1965 and eventually executed. During the few years she spent in prison, Zhao covered her cell's walls, clothes and sheets with poems written in her own blood. 'Of course, I didn't choose Lin Zhao

by chance,' wrote Delambre, who saw in Zhao's story and Su-Mei Tse's work a transition 'from the fountain of ink to the fountain of blood'. The publication on the source material includes archival images of books burned in Berlin in 1933, juxtaposed with a photograph of *Many Spoken Words*. It reminds us of what it means when freedom of expression is restricted because of cultural, religious, or political opposition to certain ideologies.

Claire Fontaine, an artist collective named after the French stationery brand, based their installation *Become a Sea* on a text by Jalal ad-Din Rumi, the famous 13th century Persian mystic poet: 'Every form you see draws its origin from the unseen divine world. So if the form vanishes, what does it matter? Its origin was from the Eternal. Do not grieve that every form you see, every mystical truth you hear will one day vanish. The Fountain is always gushing water. Neither Fountain nor water will ever stop flowing. So why mourn? Your spirit is a fountain; river after river flow from it, put all mourning out of your mind forever and keep on drinking from the water. Do not be afraid. The water is limitless.' The installation includes *La mer à boire* (2023), a drinking fountain containing water with 38 grams of salt per litre in a blue tank characteristic of the Mediterranean landscape. Salty water is often associated with tears and with the sea. The title of the sculpture comes from the French expression 'ce n'est pas la mer à boire', used when something is difficult but not impossible. The Mediterranean, where Claire Fontaine live, is a place of many struggles and contradictions. The photographs of the tiles printed on vinyl alter the neutrality of the exhibition space and bring the texture of the Mediterranean as a visual context for both works. A brickbat, a sculpture of a brick wrapped in a book cover, reads 'Homo Sacer', the famous book by Italian

philosopher Giorgio Agamben (b. 1942, Rome). In this seminal text, Agamben explores the origins of the state of exception, the moment in which human rights are legally suspended inside democratic regimes. Agamben shows how episodes of genocide, deportation and racial laws are connected to a history of human rights that is still being written and can easily be reversed according to the interests of the people in power.

Su-Mei Tse's fountain and Claire Fontaine's photographic floor from southern Italy, together with a saltwater fountain, develop a powerful dialogue across recent history and languages, in which we can claim a space to reflect different realities, concerns, value systems and our own responsibilities within them.



Su-Mei Tse, *Many Spoken Words*, 2009
In collaboration with Jean-Lou Majerus
Collection Mudam Luxembourg
Acquisition 2009
Photo: Aurélien Mole

6. Equity

Level 0
East Gallery

Artists

Tomaso Binga
Nora Turato

Performer

Matilde Cerruti Quara

Cohabiting in the East Gallery of the ground floor at Mudam, the work of artists Nora Turato (b. 1991, Zagreb) and Tomaso Binga (b. 1931, Salerno) explore word flow as a way of uncovering what it means to live in contemporary society. Exhibited together, as two women artists working in the 1970s and today, this chapter of the exhibition presents a dialogue on the timeless urgency of creating space for women to be heard.

Turato's video performance, *someone ought to tell you what it's really all about* (2019), presents the artist on a pitch-black stage, reciting an accumulation of words gathered from social media comments, commercials, books and films. In this work, Turato speaks with a deliberate intention, her words aimed at the audience like sharp knives, projecting the often-violent flow of information from news and social networks. 'It's like the Internet in my head' claims the artist; and during her performance, Turato enters a trance-like state, enunciating not only her own thoughts but the never-ending flow of judgements, beliefs and so many other words emanating from the Internet.

In *someone ought to tell you what it's really all about*, the artist's voice truly carries her words, filling up the entire gallery. This reclaiming of space through speech, sound or text is a common thread in both Turato and Binga's artistic practices.

At the start of Binga's career, the artist used the medium of language to convey her vision, playing with the idea of a woman's role in traditional Italian society. During Binga's 1971 debut exhibition at Studio Oggetto in Caserta, Bianca Pucciarelli Menna presents works under the pseudonym of Tomaso Binga. In this act, Binga renounced her female identity to reclaim her freedom as an artist in an art world then dominated by men. The radical decision of liberating herself from

the restricting patriarchal lens, recalls the Roman feminist movement of 1970, 'Rivolta femminile' or Women's Revolt which was made up of artists, art critics and writers such as Carla Lonzi or Elvira Banotti, and played a major role in the implementation of 'female freedom' [libertà femminile] in Italy.

Questions of identity and feminism are deeply ingrained in Binga's work. In 1976 at Casa Malangone in Roma, Binga presented the installation *Carta da parato* and the performance *iO sOnO unA cArTA*, dressed in wallpaper. In 1977, the artist decides to marry her alter ego Tomaso Binga taking on the role of both husband and wife, during a performance at the Campo D Gallery in Roma.

Covering the ground floor of Mudam's East Gallery, the red and white wallpaper motif of Binga's *Carta da parato* transforms the museum in a domestic environment, while presenting other works including *Bianca Menna e Tomaso Binga. Oggi sposi* (1977), a display of two wedding portraits that show the artist and her male counterpart, *Io sono Io, Io sono Me* (1976) or *Mater* (1977–2015), works where Binga's body are in dialogue with words. In *Alfabeto proverbiale* (1999), the artist created an alphabet of proverbs with hopeful mantras such as 'art is harmony' and more poignant statements like 'enough with the lies'. A series of Binga's poems, written during the 1970s, are also presented at Mudam. Although they are written words, Binga's poems are very vocal in nature. In *Poesia Muta* (1976), the phrase 'nOn parlare !! nOn parlare !!' is repeated seven times, as if echoing in the gallery.

Throughout her career, Binga has used a specific technique called 'asemic writing'. She describes it as a 'free flowing almost living thing that (can) proliferate like a flood of cells invading the environment'. In the

case of *A Model*, and more specifically in the presentation of *Carta da parato* and the work *Mater*, Binga's writing invades the otherwise blank canvas of the gallery. The ability for Binga's works to expand beyond the frame enters a dialogue with Turato's flow of speech exhibited in her video. The voices of two artists come together to offer visitors a broad understanding of their experience as women in society.



Nora Turato, *someone ought to tell you what it's really all about*, 2019
Collection Mudam Luxembourg
Donation 2022 – The artist and LambdaLambdaLambda, Pristina
Photo: Nora Turato

7. Patterns

Level +1
East Gallery

Artists

Nina Beier and Bob Kil
General Idea

Performers

Eléonore Ghysaert
Serge Daniel Kabore
Bob Kil
Aimé-es Rossi
Jeanna Serikbayeva

Nina Beier (b. 1975, Århus, Denmark) and Bob Kil (b. 1975, Seoul) regularly collaborate to create sculptural and performative installations that are resplendent with physical and temporal components. *Field Trip* (2023) is composed of continuous rows of flowers in identical pots arranged in grids, creating pathways for visitors to navigate, and ultimately hosting a choreography.

Field Trip, located in Mudam's East Gallery on the first floor, is in dialogue with work selected from the Mudam Collection; the *Pasta Paintings* by General Idea, the artist collective founded in 1969 by Felix Partz (b. 1945, Winnipeg – d. 1994, Toronto), Jorge Zontal (b. 1944, Parma – d. 1994, Toronto) and AA Bronson (b. 1946, Vancouver). The presence of General Idea, through two shell pasta paintings, one depicting the Marlboro logo and the other the Mastercard logo offer a historical counterpoint to Beier and Kil's body of work, placing it within a broad perspective, one which critiques consumer society, mass media and the shaping of collective consciousness. This can also be seen in the way *Field Trip* puts the museum to the test, bringing living elements into its midst: both the flowers and the performers will be cared by the museum staff throughout the exhibition duration, while General Idea's shell pasta paintings, a commodity, which Mudam is duty-bound to preserve for future generations.

Satirical and deliberately provocative, General Idea, whose name might evoke major corporations such as General Electric, employed parody from the outset to critique museum institutions and culture, subverting the art market and, more broadly, the economics of the art world. In 1970, they invented the character of Miss General Idea, organising a mock beauty pageant as a form of social critique. In 1980, they created the installation *The Boutique from the 1984 Miss General Idea*

Pavilion to sell their multiples. General Idea's auto-fictional work, which can be read as a critical commentary on society, needs to be understood in the context of its time marked by a neoliberal economy that stimulated individualism and consumerism whilst promoting standardised beauty ideals. General Idea's diversionary venture was based on this observation. 'We knew that Glamour was artificial. We knew that in order to be glamorous we had to become plagiarists, intellectual parasites. We moved in on history and occupied images, emptying them of meaning, reducing them to shells. We filled these shells then with Glamour, the creampuff innocence of idiots, the naughty silence of shark fins slicing oily waters.' The *Pasta Paintings*, four of which are part of the Mudam Collection, were produced from 1985 to 1986 and illustrates the collective's gift for *détournement*, or cultural hacks. The painting series is symptomatic of the 'image virus' in its appropriation of immediately recognisable logos, and what the artists called 'the act of parasitising a cultural image' – with culture referring to both art and industry. In other words, any mythology tied to consumption.

Field by Beier proposes an extension of General Idea's deconstruction of ideas that serve to obfuscate the reality of industry and society. Through her installation, Beier confronts the symbolic and material values we attribute to objects, by highlighting their production, circulation, acquisition, use, as well as disposal. In so doing, Beier reveals the extent to which consumer goods bear the trace of the cultural and economic power structures that shape our world. The museum institution, which can be seen as a cog in the cultural industry is not immune to this criticism. In the way they are installed, the potted flowers that cover the floor are an example of mass production, intended for both private and public use. They are lined up in a manner that is reminiscent of intensive cultivation and wholesale industry warehouses. They are identical clones,

whose artificial and dizzying abundance is best left ignored or concealed with the Newspeak-like comfort language that is characteristic of greenwashing.

Trip by Kil, at regular intervals during the duration of the exhibition, completes the piece with which a group of five performers walk through the aisles. The formation in *Trip*, in which Kil's body is framed by other bodies, incorporates the apparent convention between a singer and their dancers, unifying and amplifying the energy and intensity. The troupe moves slowly across the grids in a V formation. As with the generic flowers, there is something artificial and repetitive about the way they walk. At first glance, the emergence of bodies contrasts with the inert environment. Their behaviour is stiff, mechanical and disturbing. Their steps cadenced and their gestures jerky. They are not individuals with free will, but a group of beings with no substance, no volition. The cloned imagery formed by minimal, steady, repetitive animations with multiple bodies evoke a sense similar to the glitching or the malfunction of digital language.

At a time when museums must all too often walk in step with the art market, the work of Beier and Kil can be seen as a reminder to visitors that freedom of choice is a sham or a virtue that needs to be cared for. It also calls into question the usual ways in which we learn to move around in museums. The motif of 'unlearning' is clearly apparent.



Nina Beier and Bob Kil, *Field Trip*, 2023
Installation / Performance view, Art Sonje Center, Seoul, 2023
Courtesy of the artists, Standard (Oslo), Oslo and Croy Nielsen, Vienna

8. Contemporaneity

Level +1
West Gallery

Artists

Anna Boghiguan
Andrea Bowers
Daniela Ortiz
Krista Belle Stewart

There is beauty in understanding the world is made up of multiple realities – and welcoming them within and around oneself. By acknowledging this, the notions of contradiction and multiplicity becomes one of coexistence.

A Model seeks to underline how hospitality can be a means through which we can rethink the museum institution. The works of Anna Boghiguan (b. 1946, Cairo), Andrea Bowers (b. 1965, Wilmington, Ohio), Daniela Ortiz (b. 1985, Cusco, Peru) and Krista Belle Stewart (b. 1979, Syilx Nation) guide us in recognising different protean realities in relation to often unrepresented societies and overlooked historical events. The artists propose contemporary practices of resistance and social engagement shaped by hospitality and empathy, and showcase the links forged between art and activism in recent decades. Rejecting linear, one-dimensional modes of thinking, the works in this room discreetly call us to pay attention, to keep our curiosity awake and to question upheld truths and narratives.

The Silk Road (2020–21) by Anna Boghiguan exemplifies the artist's use of historical narratives to draw parallels between the past and present. Titled after the trade route that connected the East and West and active from the second century BCE until the mid-fifteenth century (which is being reissued today), Boghiguan's installation focuses on the history of Japan's silk industry to unfold the political, economic and industrial development that shaped the world as we know it today. In *The Silk Road*, the artist brings to the foreground an alternative reading of this route by revealing its multifaceted nature and its role as a catalyst for intellectual, spiritual and cultural exchange. The road was a network for the spread of Buddhism from India to East and Central Asia, and a site for



Andrea Bowers, *Radical Feminist Pirate Ship Tree Sitting Platform*, 2013
Exhibition view, *Andrea Bowers. Grief and Hope*, Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, 15.03 – 25.10.2020.
Collection Mudam Luxembourg
Donation 2023 – Gaby and Wilhelm Schürmann with the support of the members of the Cercle des collectionneurs du Mudam Luxembourg
Photo: Wilhelm Schürmann, Herzogenrath



Ali Cherri, *Somniculus*, 2017
 Coproduction: Jeu de Paume, Paris; Fondation Nationale des Arts Graphiques et Plastiques
 et CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux
 Réalisé avec le concours du Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, Musée du Louvre, Muséum
 national d'histoire naturelle, Musée de l'Homme, Musée du Quai Branly – Jacques Chirac
 Courtesy of the artist and Imane Farès, Paris

the sharing of knowledge on sericulture and silk manufacturing industries, where mainly women and young girls worked at all levels of production. In 1872, with the employment of French engineer Paul Brunat (b. 1840, Bourg-de-Péage, France – d. 1908, Paris) to lead the Tomioka Silk Mill, Japan's first modern silk factory, French women silk workers shared knowledge on the industrial production techniques of silk with Japanese labourers, which was disseminated nationally. Its force enabled the silk industry to become a primary industry in Japan, with ripple effects on military capabilities, technological advancement and industrial development. Boghiguian's twelve paintings, suspended from the ceiling with silk threads, reveal the fundamental contribution of women's invisible and intense labour in enabling a nation's prosperity and power, and in opening Japan to the world.

In the series of painted panels, *The Rebellion of the Roots (France)* (2022), Daniela Ortiz exposes lasting relationships across centuries and continents, imagining alternative narratives of colonial histories and their ongoing legacies. The spirits of François Mackandal (b. 1730, Guinea – d. circa 1758, Cap-Haïtien), Toussaint Louverture (b. 1742, Cap-Haïtien – d. 1803, La Cluse-et-Mijoux) and Thomas Isidore Noël Sankara (b. 1949, Yako, Burkina Faso – d. 1987, Ouagadougou), three significant figures of resistance movements against Western colonial rule, exert revenge on the perpetrators of injustice and racism through tropical foods, seeds and animals of their invaded land. Decolonial activism is at the heart of Ortiz's practice, who seeks to enact a profound change in the way we think about our economy, culture and justice. Through a spiritual and magical lens, three short stories, depicted in a naïf style, invite visitors to rethink ongoing colonial and capitalist systems by envisioning a resistance so powerful it

can overcome death and transcend time and space.

Andrea Bowers' *Radical Feminist Pirate Ship Tree Sitting Platform* (2013) is animated by a call for resistance and activism. In 2011, Bowers was arrested in California for tree sitting, an act of environmentalist civil disobedience in which protesters sit in a tree, usually on a small platform built for that purpose. During this act, which aimed at preventing native oak woodland habitat from being clearcut, the artist met a veteran tree sitter who had spent the last six years living in old growth redwoods in California. As Bowers notes, upon asking the activist for his fantasy tree sitting platform: 'All of my frustration, insecurities, and inequalities of living in a patriarchal culture flooded over me with his two words: Pirate Ship. I was immediately annoyed and unamused, of course. A typical man, I thought. Somehow it was so obvious yet, I would have never thought of that.' Built with the veteran tree sitting activist, the work stands as a symbol of solidarity. An extract from the 1996 essay 'Sin Big', by controversial pioneering feminist Mary Daly (b. 1928, Schenectady – d. 2010, Massachusetts), fills the ship's sail: 'Ever since childhood, I have been honing my skills for living the life of a Radical Feminist Pirate and cultivating the Courage to Sin.' This essay is a battle cry for Bowers, who was struck by Daly's explanation of the origins of the word 'sin' deriving from the Indo-European root 'es', meaning 'to be': 'When I discovered this etymology, I intuitively understood that for a woman trapped in patriarchy, which is the religion of the entire planet, "to be" in the fullest sense is "to sin".'

Krista Belle Stewart presents a reflection on Luxembourg alongside elements from her installation *Truth to Material* (2019–ongoing). Working with video,

photography, sculpture and installation, the archive is central to Stewart's practice for drawing personal and political narratives and questioning institutional histories. Stewart first discovered the universe of the Indianers in 2006, a subculture of recreational enthusiasts. It was not until 2019 that Stewart attended the event 'The Week', a gathering Indianers organise once a year to dress up in fake regalia, sleep in tipis and perform mythologised rituals. Stewart's encounter with the Indianers stems from her research on Karl May (b. 1842, Hohenstein-Ernstthal – d. 1912, Radebeul), an influential German literary figure whose novels contributed to defining an imaginary of the Native American or Indigenous Canadian tribal nations. Western literary stories and dated anthropological accounts shaped European imaginary of what constituted Native American and Indigenous Canadian culture. Objects gifted to Stewart from attendees, whom she befriended, and vinyl-printed photographs taken from her time in Saxony in 2006, 2007 and 2019, illustrate a sense of community through what was for Stewart an uncomfortable recreation of stereotyped Indigenous culture. Stewart's perspective is essential in raising significant, unresolved questions on the weight of historical and cultural appropriation and its use for channelling community and belonging. Stewart was invited to offer a personal observation of Luxembourg and its institutional collections through a new video work.



Krista Belle Stewart, *Truth to Material*, 2020
Installation view, Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto, Ontario
Photo: Toni Hafkenscheid

9. Listening Station

Level +1
Small West Gallery

What does it mean to be a contemporary art museum? What purpose does it serve and who is it for? Which works of art are exhibited and why does it matter?

The 'Listening Station', a space dedicated to a series of podcasts, interviews and sounds, invites visitors to explore the multiple questions of museums and art spaces of our time, through a selection of voices that offer a guide to discourse on what a museum *could be*. The Listening Station is made with the intent to provide audiences with dialogues and exchanges on recent developments in cultural institutions while offering a moment for pause and relaxation.

Exploring a broad variety of topics, ranging from the purpose and history of the ground-breaking exhibition *The Model – A Model for a Qualitative Society* by Palle Nielsen, presented at the Moderna Museet in 1968, alongside dialogues on contemporary museum practices and audience engagement, the Listening Station presents sounds produced by international artists, curators, museums, podcasters and visitors.

What would your idea for a model of a museum be? Is it a gallery of pictures? A safe space for vulnerable archives? Or a place where security guards write love letters to their favourite paintings? Located at Mudam's Small West Gallery, the Listening Station offers a break from viewing art to let one's ears guide you through *A Model*.



Tomaso Binga, *Io sono Io, Io sono Me*, 1976
Courtesy of Archivio Tomaso Binga and Galleria Tiziana Di Caro, Naples
Photo: Verita Monselles

I am paper – An exploration of Tomaso Binga's poetry

Performance by Matilde Cerruti Quara
08.02.2024 (opening) | 20h00

Trip

Performance by Bob Kil within the
installation *Field* by Nina Beier
08.02.2024 (opening) | 19h30 – 21h00
10.02.2024 + 11.02.2024 | 15h00 – 18h00
13.04.2024 + 14.04.2024 | 15h00 – 18h00
18.05.2024 + 19.05.2024 | 15h00 – 18h00
20.07.2024 + 21.07.2024 | 15h00 – 18h00

Window Treatments

Performance by Rayyane Tabet
10.02.2024 | 11h00 + 14h00

Kids Take Over!

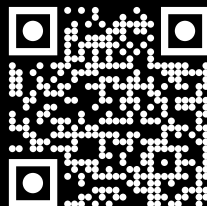
In collaboration with UP Foundation
Luxembourg
19.03.2024 | 14h30 – 16h30 | Age 12-16
21.03.2024 | 14h30 – 16h30 | Age 9-12
26.03.2024 | 14h30 – 16h30 | Age 6-8
28.03.2024 | 14h30 – 16h30 | Age 4-6

Mudam Drop-in! Dadofonic Chapter 3

In collaboration with Ligue HMC
18–19.05.2024, 10h00 – 18h00

The Contract

Performance by Hanne Lippard
13.07.2024 | 16h00



Full programme on
mudam.com

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Cover:
Dardan Zhegrova, *Your enthusiasm to tell a story (gold)*, 2016
Collection Mudam Luxembourg | Installation view, Manifesta 14,
Grand Hotel, Pristina, 22 July – 30 October 2022
Photo: Leart Rama

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Lourindo Soares

Acknowledgements

Mudam Luxembourg – Musée d'Art Moderne
Grand-Duc Jean thanks the Ministry of Culture,
all the donors and sponsors, and particularly

The Leir Foundation, M. et Mme Norbert
Becker-Dennewald, Cargolux, Luxembourg
High Security Hub, Allen & Overy, Banque
Degroof Petercam, Clearstream, JTI

as well as

Uniqlo, Arendt & Medernach, Baloise Holding
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Bonn & Schmitt, Dussmann Services, Indigo
Park Services, Les Amis des Musées d'Art
et d'Histoire Luxembourg and American
Friends of Mudam.

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With the support of:



Thanks to:
The Danish Arts Foundation and
Carlsberg Foundation