

How Am I?

dansk og indisk samtidskunst
danish and indian contemporary art

kastrupgårdsamlingen 28.juni - 9. september 2012

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The Quest for a new Identity

Text by Art historian and Art Critic,
Trine Ross

We tend to forget that our identity is negotiable and is constantly being negotiated around and inside us. But when we forget, the artworks of Mille Kalsmose are here to remind us.

The ongoing project, All My Suicides, which has so far resulted in both a Part One, Two and Three consists of Kalsmose's five official name changes – from the name, "Henriette Olesen", she was christened through several variations until she reached her present name, "Mille Kalsmose-Hjelmborg", in 2008.

The name we are given by our parents reveals many aspects of our selves. Most names are gender specific, but they often also reveal our nationality, age and background. But names can be changed and maybe we can change with them.

Behind each new name taken by Kalsmose lies a wish for change and a will to take charge of her own destiny – and identity.

All My Suicides consists of three parts. Part I has five, two meter high cylinder shaped lit columns in plexiglass, which contains different name- and birth certificates all belonging to the artist herself. There is one column for each of the five name changes, which Mille Kalsmose-Hjelmborg has taken during the last 10 years. From her first name Henriette Olesen, which she was born under in 1972, until her existing name, which she took in 2008.

The Second part of the work is an installation of five lightning headstones in plexiglass and LED light.

In All My Suicides - Part Three Kalsmose lies her former identities to rest and unite all headstones in One, and come together again.

Thereby reminding us, that even as we change, evolve or just grow older, we still carry some of our past as part of the present, painful or joyous as it may be. And only by facing this fundamental fact we can truly ... change.

SITE SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS:

2012

Patterns, IKL, Copenhagen Business School, Frederiksberg, Denmark (In process)

The Core, Gentofte Hospital, Gentofte, Denmark

Beam Me Up, Ballerup Hovedbibliotek, Ballerup, Denmark, (In process)

2009

Planes of Thought, Copenhagen Business School, Frederiksberg, Denmark

2006

Golden Drop, Manu Vision, Frederiksberg, Denmark

2005

Atkins, Ørestad, Denmark

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

2012

Politiken, Alle mine selvmord har gjort mig til den, jeg er i dag, Michael Bo

Kristlig Dagblad, Kunstner udstiller egne selvmord, Heidi Højgård

Politiken, Om Kunstnerlivets vilkår, Jens Lenler

Politiken Online, iByen, Kunstner har skiftet identitet fem gange, Michael Bo

How Am I - Danish and Indian contemporary Art, Catalog, Trine Ross & Anirudh Chari

All My Suicides, The Quest for a new identity, Trine Ross

TV-Interview, TV2-Lorry, http://www.lorry.dk/arkiv/2012/6/28?video_id=68888

TV-Interview, DR-Aftenshowet:

<http://www.dr.dk/DR1/Aftenshowet/Klip+fra+Aftenshowet/20101217143204.htm#/46118>

2010

Et billede på viden, De Farver, Copenhagen

Alle på Udstillingen får løn, Billedkunstnere, BKF, Copenhagen

Personal Identity in Contemporary Art, Disturbis online Magazine, Barcelona

2009

At forville sig ind i en organisation, Ole Fogh Kirkeby, Copenhagen

Liv/Kunst/Arbejde, Daniel Hjort, Copenhagen
Planes of Thought - a site specific exhibition at MPP, Mpp Leads, Copenhagen

Planes of Thought - et essay om Identitetsskabelse gennem udsmykning, Jesper Bjørn v. Ole Thyssen, Copenhagen

Mille Kalsmose, Outrospective, Sisse Markvadine Pedersen, WAS-Wonderland Artspace, Copenhagen

2007

Girl with pram, Wonderland-mag, Copenhagen

Alice i eventyrland på speed, Lone Sønderby, Q-Magazine, Copenhagen

Kvinder i kunst, Karin Sjørup, Danish Arts Council, Copenhagen

Kunst i øjet, Ole Lindbo, TV-interview, DK4, Copenhagen

2006

Optimisme i A-huset trods alt, Pelle Ammundsen, Amarkaneren, Copenhagen

2005

Kunstneriske øjne på ingeniører, Helena Spliid Christiansen, Atkins Scandinavia, Copenhagen

Kunstnere og Erhvervsfolk på oplevelsestræf, Kirsten Baltzer Kahr, Musikeren, Copenhagen

2004

La vida de los Artistas, Tele 25, Barcelona

Born in Horsens, 1972, lives and work in Copenhagen

STUDIES & COURSES:

2010

Master in Contemporary Art and Aesthetics, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, (UAB), Spain

2009

The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, seminars, Copenhagen, Denmark

2008

School of Visual Arts, (SVA), Residency program, New York , USA

2002

The Art School in Ærø, Vestermøllegaard, Denmark

FUNDINGS:

2008

Danish Art Council, Denmark
New York State Council of the Arts, NYC, USA
New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, NYC, USA
Kaj Houmann Nielsens Fond til almene formål, Denmark
Grosserer L.F.Foghts Fondstøtte, Denmark

2005

Travelling scholarship (with suvi Andrea Helminen), by Danish Film Instructors Committee, Denmark

2002

Scholarship by The Art School in Ærø, Denmark
Sponsorship by Pippihuset, Søby, Denmark

SELECTED GROUP & SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

2012

How am I, Kastrupgårdsamlingen, Copenhagen, Denmark

2011

Copenhagen Art Fair, Gallery Rohde Contemporary, Copenhagen, Denmark

Artist+Artist, Copenhagen Photo Festival, Gallery Rohde Contemporary, Copenhagen, Denmark

2010

Copenhagen Art Fair, Gallery Rohde Contemporary, Copenhagen, Denmark

2009

Different Lives, Chelsea Art Museum, New York, USA

Outrospective, Wonderland Art Space, WAS, Copenhagen, Denmark

Your Documents Please, Galeria Ajolote Arte Contemporaneo, Guadalajara, Mexico

Different Lives, La 20 Edición de la Biennial D'Eivissa, Museu D'Art Contemporani, Spain

Different Lives, Gershwin Hotel, New York, USA

2008

Fill in Blank Spaces, Gallery Karsi sanat Calismalari, Istanbul.

Your Documents Please, The Museum of Arts & Crafts-ITAMI, Hygo, Japan, ZAIM Kanagawa, Japan,

Grounded - Was Man Meant to Fly, New York, USA

2006

Kunstneres Sommerudstilling, Janusbygningen, The Art Museum of West Jutland (Juried group show), Tistrup, Denmark

DCK#6, (Juried group show) Filosofgangen, The exhibition Hall of Funen for Art and Design, Odense, Denmark

A-Huset, Islandsbrygge, Denmark

2003

BAC, Festival Internacional de Barcelona, Spain



Official Birth- and Name Certificates

Den Danske Folkeskole

Fødsels- og dødsattest

Navn: Steffen
 Efternavn: Steffen

Forældrene: Christoffer Steffen Sørensen
Steffen Sørensen

Fødselsdato: 1972 den 4. august

Sted for fødsel: Den Store, København

Sted for fødsel (ikke nødvendigvis det samme som fødselsdatoen): 1972 den 25. oktober

Forældrene eller anden myndighed, som har ansvaret for barnet: Christoffer Steffen Sørensen og Steffen Sørensen

Udstedt: 21. oktober 2012

[Signature]

Den Danske Folkeskole

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Udstedt: 4. juni 2012

[Signature]

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Udstedt: 20. august 2012

[Signature]

Den Danske Folkeskole

Den Danske Folkeskole

FØDSELS- OG DØDSATTEST

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 Efternavn: Steffen

Fødselsdato: 1972, 4. august

Sted for fødsel: Den Store, København

Sted for fødsel (ikke nødvendigvis det samme som fødselsdatoen): 1972, 25. oktober

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Udstedt: 21. oktober 2012

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Udstedt: 4. juni 2012

[Signature]

Den Danske Folkeskole



About

Mille Kalsmose is a Danish visual artist, based in CPH. She works with creating new models that allows her to investigate and understand the concept of Identity in an experience-based, almost antropological way. She also works with corporate identity expressing visually the value-creating potentials of companies and institutions in site-specific works. She holds a Master from UAB, Barcelona and attended SVA, New York.

Mille Kalsmose has been exhibited nationally in juried exhibitions Museum and solo shows. Internationally she has exhibited in places such as Chelsea Art Museum in New York and ITAMI, Museum for arts And Craft in Hygo and been featured in publications and TV-shows.

Mille Kalsmose creates larger site specific commissions in public institutions and private corporations working with both the physical and non-physical/value-based potentials of a certain site/institution or corporation.

Kalsmose also takes part in think tanks, pilot projects and counseling institutions such as Københavns Kommune, Nordjyllands Amt, Ørestads Selskabet, Atkins Rådgivende Ingenører & Dansk Design Center.

Changing Identity in a Postmodern World

Many people have a notion of loosing the natural and authentic reality. They still operate within a modernistic vision of reality - a reality associated with the natural and authentic. Mille Kalsmose doesn't. She works with narratives that intend to understand the new ideas of reality. A reality where there is no longer one authentic and natural reality but a series of parallel, man made, fluid dimensions – and according to Amelia Jones they are just as authentic as nature.

These fluid realities affect the art world and there is an increasing tendency to use narratives in contemporary art. A tendency that according to Mette Gamst is a consequence of the breakdown of modernism.

She refers to the situation before postmodernism when we were surrounded by a set of authorized narratives about the truth - be they about the economy, the objective science, political ideologies, religion etc. Their validity was more or less unquestioned because we assumed that things would stay this way.

They have become unreliable and many of them are even proven wrong with the consequence that the universal explanations of life are undermined. The death of the master narratives, and thereby the possibility to understand oneself through something given outside ourselves, results in insecurity and uncertainty with regard to the question – who am I? The individual is forced to find meaning in, and for, itself.

With the death of the universal narratives we see a turning towards the ultimate and personal sphere, with the micro narratives from the everyday life as new entrance to reality.

When there is no real place to go and there is nothing real to turn to, there is an opportunity to go everywhere. So the real question in these times is how to go there.

And that is what Kalsmose is showing us. When there is no longer one truth about who you are, then you have a strong influence on how you are.

The intimate space is made public and Kalsmose uses her surroundings to decipher reality through what is common in the everyday life of the artists.

We live in a culture of stereotypes as ready-mades through film and TV like the classical narration and myth about e.g. the concept of identity. That is what Kalsmose does; she uses the culturally created narratives such as the concept of identity as ready-mades. She scans, deconstructs and reconstructs the cultural image and her experience of identity and so her work becomes an elaboration on the concept of identity itself.

She works directly with the conventions around the perception of identity as a coherent solid and stable thing and the traditional view on identity as a condition instead of a process – she points at identity as a process as something fluid and non-fixed.

By using her body in her art, transforming and exposing herself within new identities Mille Kalsmose finds ways to deal with the mediated and complex conditions of our time.

Her work becomes truly interesting and authentic when we recognize her personal identity behind the work and connects us to the self biographical aspect - the narrative she produces about herself as representatives of other selves in our times.

So what is really at stake with the works of Mille Kalsmose is a complex reality from another angle where she not only makes visible the features of our time, but also offers new models of possible realities, with multiple identities.

New Concepts of Individual Identity

*By Professor, Dr. Phil., Ole Fogh Kirkeby
Director of Center of Art & Leadership, Copenhagen Business School*

The artist Mille Kalsmose is making art on the borders between the traditional genres and traditional concept of art on the one side, and art as a genuine part of our lived lives, on the other.

It is possible to understand art as a form of practise and knowledge which in its own important way contributes to the reinforcement of our social and historical consciousness, and hence to the creation of new outlets to conceptions of the self and the other person which are urgent at all levels of our reality, not at least what concerns working life.

Now, more than ever, man is an enigma to himself. Our capacities to create, shape, construct, and design, increases day by day. But the more we try to find ourselves in this growing realm of possibilities, in this vortex of viruality, the more we seem to loose ourselves. Caught in this tension the old values and the great narratives are not sufficient.

Science, technology, nor entrepreneurship, are not able to yield a basic guidance here. Only beauty does. Beauty unites all the contradictions in that which we fear at most, the indefinable. That is why art is of such crucial importance to us now. It is the only practise which is able to cope with the indefinable.

This is exactly what Mille Kalsmose does through her art: She creates new connections between the individual world of experience, and the social reality permanently changing.

Here we exist in a constant tension between loosing our identity through the innumerable social relations and networks in which we are constantly being absorbed, and the need to confront this process of demolition through the permanent reshaping of our own identity.

It is crucial that this reshaping must not be an excluding process negatively directed towards the other person, but in stead must be able to receive him in his unique existence.

Thus new concepts of individual identity must be developed leading to binding social relations, and this is the task which Mille Kalsmose undertakes through her art.

Milla Kalsmose

* 23. 11. 2005 † 6. 9. 2008

Mindet lever



