



Copenhagen Contemporary is opening a unique group show redefining collaborative art practice and paving new ways for improved visibility, accessibility and representation

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On 27 April, Copenhagen Contemporary opens its doors to *Residential*, an exploratory exhibition created by Project Art Works. For more than 25 years, this British artists' collective has spearheaded collaborative art practice with neurodivergent people, inviting visitors to participate in brand new ways of co-creation and reflection.

Residential focuses on art's potential in terms of the individual, our perceptions of each other, and the community. The collaboration kicks off a broader, comprehensive effort by CC to increase the visibility and representation of neurodiversity in the art world and in society at large. With the ambition of becoming Denmark's most accessible art institution, CC is in the process of developing new mediation strategies, workshops and facilities, made possible in part with support from the Bikuben Foundation and the New Carlsberg Foundation.

Hall 4

Project Art Works

Residential

27.04.–29.12.24

A salon-style hang of paintings unfolds in a whirl of colours, textures, patterns and motifs. A making space in the exhibition invites guests to take part in artistic exchange and co-creation.

Project Art Works, a British collective of neurodiverse artists and activists, has worked for 25 years in the intersection of art and social care. Over the years, they have built a collection of more than 6000 works created by neurodivergent artists with complex support needs, who have found new ways to express themselves artistically. Their archive is a powerful physical and visual testament of people who are too often hidden away and forgotten in society. Combining art from their collection with an open workshop offering CC's visitors a chance to try out a variety of the collective's methods firsthand, the upcoming exhibition reflects Project Art Works' collaborative approach.

Works created collaboratively over the course of the exhibition by invited groups and public audiences in workshops will be hung within the making space that will expand and develop over its entire run. The collective's work links to pioneers like the German artist Joseph Beuys and the Danish artist Poul Gernes, who focused on the social potential and responsibility of art and the art institution.

The activism of Project Art Works speaks to an art-historical avant-garde tradition that rejects the notion of the exalted artist-genius. In the spirit of Beuys's principles of 'social sculpture', art and creativity can be harnessed to transform the conditions and structures that shape our lives, CC invites everyone to visit Refshaleøen and take part in *Residential*.

A new film by the Project Art Works studios, *I've Got Ideas, Don't You Worry*, sits within the exhibition revealing the subtle and expansive nature of speaking and non-speaking creativity and communication. At *Residential*, everyone, regardless of language, body and ability, can explore creativity, materials and processes and their connection to others, leaving evidence of their presence through art.

The project is unique in a Danish context, and will shape CC's practice and commitment going forward to accommodate people with visible as well as invisible disabilities. Through the partnership, CC and Project Art Works aim to increase representation in the art world and in society at large, bolstering CC's position as a vibrant institution where everyone can share in the art experience.

Marie Laurberg, director of CC, says:

“Project Art Works’ activist method is an inspiring and courageous answer to one of the great challenges of public life: the conditions for people with physical and mental impairments. As the Danish poet Caspar Eric writes, ‘Why has it become almost naive to ask if it’s possible to make life even a little bit for people who are already living with the extra work of a disability?’ Inviting Project Art Works into CC’s halls and engine room, we seek to explore how art institutions can support that project.”

CEO and artist director in Project Art Works, Kate Adams, adds:

“It has been a privilege to have worked alongside this innovative institution, its communities and neurominorities in Copenhagen. The immense proportions of the spaces in Copenhagen Contemporary have enabled the development of Residential that further mines and celebrates our continually evolving archive of works by neurodivergent artists.”

The Bikuben Foundation supports the efforts for inclusion, which will continue well beyond the run of the exhibition, and their director of arts Dina Vester Feilberg says:

“Copenhagen Contemporary wish to strengthen an important dimension of the work for a sustainable future. I hope it can inspire others in the Danish art world – especially because CC has succeeded in creating a collaboration with experienced international players in the field, and at the same time integrates it into both organizational development and the artistic process itself.”

About Project Art Works

Project Art Works, is a collective of neurodiverse artists and activists from Hastings, England. Project Art Works was joint winner of the 2020 Jarman Award and a nominee for the Turner Prize 2021. Project Art Works in summer 2022 participated in documenta fifteen in Kassel, and in recent years has worked with many different art institutions in Europe, including Tate Liverpool and Museo Reina Sofia. *Residential* was previously shown at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead, UK. Over the years, the collective has worked with museums and art venues in Britain and abroad. www.projectartworks.org

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