



Major new art prize, established by the Beckett Foundation with Copenhagen Contemporary, goes to Cathrine Raben Davidsen

The Beckett Foundation, in partnership with Copenhagen Contemporary (CC), has established an art prize to be awarded annually to a Danish artist who has made an original contribution in the field of art. The first winner of the Beckett Prize is Cathrine Raben Davidsen, whose captivating, dreamlike paintings make up a singular personal universe exploring life, death, transformation and time.

The Beckett Prize is given annually to an artist working in Denmark who has made an original contribution in the field of art. The award recognizes that the artist, over a significant number of years, has developed a personal artistic language embodying qualities such as humanism, conceptual precision, skilled execution and immersion in materials and devices. The prize amounts to 250,000 kroner (37,000 euros).

Marie Laurberg, director of CC, says,

“As a society, we should celebrate our artists. Artists are our most sensitive seismographs, taking the pulse of life and society with their highly evolved antennae. Who are we? Where are we going? What does it all mean? CC is a centre for living artists. With the Beckett Foundation, we will use this prize to bring artists into the spotlight. The Danish art world today is bursting with talent, and we are delighted to showcase our artists, including internationally. We are thrilled to be giving the first Beckett Prize to Cathrine Raben Davidsen, one of our greatest painters today. In an age of fast pictures that appear briefly on screens before being pushed aside and disappearing again, painting is slow, glacial even, and liberatingly analogue. Cultivating this slowness, Raben Davidsen painstakingly builds paintings layer by layer with her materials. Her pictures demand the viewer’s presence.”

Cathrine Raben Davidsen

Grounded in historical narratives, myth and literature, Raben Davidsen (b. 1972) investigates essential human traits through painting, drawing, printmaking and ceramics. In delicate lines and blurred contours, she creates compelling dream worlds enigmatically bridging past and present. There, the eye can rest – and explore infinity.

As an artist, Raben Davidsen has persistently cultivated deep time, unswayed by passing trends. Hers is a powerful voice for the importance to art of craft and immersion. In a distinctly personal way, her art filters big history through a powerful and moving visual vocabulary entirely her own.

In connection with the prize, a large monograph of Raben Davidsen's paintings is being published, featuring an essay by *Information* art editor Maria Kjær Thomsen, along with excerpts from the writings of Josefine Klougart and a conversation between Raben Davidsen and CC director Marie Laurberg, with graphic design by Studio Claus Due.

In memory of Paul Beckett

The Beckett Prize is awarded in memory of the painter Paul Beckett (1922–1994) and established on the centenary of his birth. Like Beckett, Raben Davidsen is captivated by the language of painting. Both are one-of-a-kind artists with great personal strength who march to the beat of their own drummer, in life and in art. Now, the prize is connecting them across time and space.

Michael Varming, director of the Beckett Foundation, says,

“The Beckett Foundation is established by an artist, the painter Paul Beckett, and his wife, Birte Beckett. We at the Foundation are proud to institute this prize in Paul's name to celebrate visual art. And we are delighted that the prize is instituted in partnership with CC, Denmark's largest institution of contemporary art. CC is contributing their art expertise to guarantee that artists will be supported in the best possible way.”

The Prize will be awarded for the first time on 1 December 2022, and in the future will be awarded annually at CC. The first recipient of the prize, Cathrine Raben Davidsen, is selected by the Beckett Foundation's board. In coming years, the prizewinner will be selected by a jury of curators from leading European art institutions. In turn, the prize will help raise international awareness of contemporary Danish art. The jury selects the prizewinner based on recommendations by an independent search committee.

For the next four years, the Beckett Prize Jury will consist of:

Marie Laurberg, Director, Copenhagen Contemporary
Hendrik Folkerts, Curator of International Contemporary Art and Head of Exhibitions, Moderna Museet, Stockholm
Cathérine Hug, Curator, Kunsthaus Zürich
Cliff Lauson, Director of Exhibitions, Somerset House, London.

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About Copenhagen Contemporary

Copenhagen Contemporary (CC), Copenhagen's international art centre, shows installation art by contemporary art-world stars and emerging talents alike. With 7000 m² of bright industrial space, located in the former welding hall of B&W shipyards and refurbished by architect Dorte Mandrup, CC amply accommodates the technically demanding formats and massive scales employed by many artists today. From sprawling, immersive installations to performance art and monumental video works, this is art you can walk through and experience with your whole body. Read more here:

<https://copenhagencontemporary.org/en/>

About the Beckett Foundation

The Beckett Foundation was founded on 26 June 1989 by a donation from the painter Paul Beckett and his wife, Birte Beckett. The foundation is a charitable non-profit organization awarding grants to art and culture, medicine and nature conservation. Read more here: <https://beckett-fonden.dk/>

About Cathrine Raben Davidsen

Cathrine Raben Davidsen was born in 1972 in Copenhagen. Trained as an artist at academies in Italy and the Netherlands, she also has a Master's in Art Theory and Communication from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. She has exhibited widely in Denmark and internationally, and is represented in major Danish and international collections. She has designed sets and costumes for the Royal Danish Ballet and has received numerous prestigious grants, including from the Danish Arts Foundation. Exploring mythologies, traditions and narratives, Raben Davidsen's work draws on the great masters of art history, informed by contemporary existential and philosophical thought. In 2015, she was appointed

Knight of the Order of Dannebrog by Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark.

Throughout her career, Raben Davidsen's practice has revolved around existential themes of life and death. Understanding life as a continuous process of change, Raben Davidsen explores what it means to be human. Often based on a cerebral or spiritual perspective, she investigates human interconnection across time, space and culture, and how this includes other living organisms. Linking widely different branches of historical knowledge to contemporary thought, Raben Davidsen is intent to expand and elaborate our perception of historical continuity.

Without regard for traditional hierarchies in art, craft, design and other creative fields, Raben Davidsen works with a diverse palette of references. Her art takes the form of paintings, drawings, prints and ceramics, while she also works collaboratively in costume, set and lighting design and artist's books. She takes inspiration from a variety of visual, art-historical and philosophical traditions, including the Italian Renaissance, Greek mythology, non-Western religions and belief systems, modern science and 20th-century feminist literature, while always adding layers of her own personal experience. Read more here: <https://cathrinerabendavidsen.com/>

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