



## Copenhagen Contemporary and the Glyptotek in Unique Collaboration

**In a unique collaboration, two of the largest cultural institutions in Denmark are inviting their audiences to join them on a journey across time and space. Over the next three years, a series of exhibitions will help form new perspectives on the cultural heritage of the Middle East and its significance today.**

As cultural institutions, Copenhagen Contemporary (CC) and the 125-year-old Glyptotek could not be more different. However, now they have entered into a ground-breaking, untraditional collaboration. In the course of the next three years the two institutions will present three solo exhibitions, featuring work by three international artists who live either in the Middle East or in Middle Eastern diasporas. In addition, in collaboration with curators from both institutions, the artists will be granted access to the Glyptotek's Middle Eastern antiquity collection, discussing and interpreting the significance of cultural heritage today in the light of their own work.

Using this ancient, more than 3,000-year-old material as a historical backdrop, each artist will create a single exhibition, but presented in both institutions simultaneously, contributing to wider-ranging, more contemporary stories about antiquity. The stories will aim to enhance our understanding of the diversity, mobility and geographical extent of the ancient world, which extended way beyond the national and cultural borders we know today.

### **Topical, international vision**

“As cultural institutions, whether managing an existing cultural heritage or helping produce a new one, we are storytellers. The Glyptotek is the leading museum of antiquity in the Nordic region. Our collections cover not only several thousand years, but also vast geographical areas. That includes the Middle East, with artefacts that are some of the oldest in the museum.

“Our cultural heritage and the objects we house not only represent a distant past but are also part of an ever topical discussion about the significance of cultural heritage today. The question about cultural heritage does not yield a single truth, but rather a broad spectrum of many possible answers, depending on who manages, mediates and interprets it. With their personal and artistic view of the museum's antiquity collections, the three artists will create new, wider-ranging cultural narratives, thereby bridging the gap between past and present.

“In this project, CC and the Glyptotek are creating an innovative exhibition format, bringing the world to Denmark in the shape of internationally renowned contemporary artists, and placing Denmark on the world map. The ambition and nature of this project resembles the endeavours of other leading international

museums and cultural institutions – for example, the British Museum in London and the Metropolitan Museum in New York,” says Gertrud Hvidberg-Hansen, Director of the Glyptotek.

### **Significant experiences for a broad public**

“Copenhagen Contemporary presents art created today. Our entire premises is devoted to living artists and contemporary creativity – and we take the encounter between art and audience very seriously.

“Art is fundamentally linked to freedom. It is an expression of human creativity and our ability to share feelings and experiences in material form. The idea of this ambitious collaboration is to give centre stage to a new generation of artists associated with the Middle East, letting them shed new light on the cultural heritage of the region and its importance today.

“Even as an institution dedicated to the present, we are never in an absolute ‘now’. We are inextricably linked to longer, historical, evolutionary strands, while the present always helps shape our view of the past. In the three-year partnership with the Glyptotek, we want to explore the magical space that exists between archaeology and contemporary art.

“The selected artists will explore and reflect on the historical artefacts and shed new light on them. We hope the exhibitions will pave the way for new perspectives on history and on the future we want to give one another and create for ourselves,” says Marie Laurberg, Director of Copenhagen Contemporary.

### **Abbas Akhavan**

This summer, 22. June – 26. November) CC and the Glyptotek will open the first exhibition of the series, which is the Glyptotek’s biggest ever contemporary art venture. The first artist in the series is the Abbas Akhavan (b. 1977 in Teheran, living and working in Montreal). This will be the renowned artist’s first solo exhibition in Scandinavia.

Based on the Glyptotek’s collections of antiquities from the Middle East, Akhavan will present a composite exhibition in both venues, featuring works that tackle complex geopolitical narratives and range from site-specific installations and performance to drawing, sculpture and video. In his highly alluring, tactile works, Akhavan studies displacements of objects and experiences, investigating historical, architectural and social structures associated with a particular area or place.

The two museums have received a very generous grant from Det Obelske Familiefond for their cross-institutional collaboration and their series of exhibitions devoted to international contemporary art.

**For more information about the collaboration, please contact:**

Marie Laurberg, Director  
[marielaurberg@cphco.org](mailto:marielaurberg@cphco.org)  
+45 3017 1404

**Presse contact:**

Ida Maj Ludvigsen, Head of PR & Communication  
[ida@cphco.org](mailto:ida@cphco.org)  
+45 6021 9321

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