



Copenhagen Contemporary (CC) kicks off 2024 filling the entire ground floor with new and outstanding art. Two very different exhibitions – the international artist Kapwani Kiwanga and Danish artist Cathrine Raben Davidsen – transform CC's three large halls, and more than 2.000 m² of space with mesmerizing paintings, poisonous flowers, and vibrant installations.

We are celebrating the double opening of the two exhibitions *The Length of the Horizon* and *Let Everything Happen to You* with a grand party co-hosted with Danish underground fashion brand Icon Visions and featuring a performance by legendary Danish dance-pop group Infernal.

Download press material here: <https://copenhagencontemporary.org/en/press>

A press preview will be held on 25 January at 11:00, with a welcome by CC's director Marie Laurberg, senior curator Aukje Lepoutre Ravn and an introduction by the artist Cathrine Raben Davidsen.

For registration and interview requests, please contact ida@cphco.org

Hall 1 + 2
Kapwani Kiwanga
The Length of the Horizon
26 January – 25 August 2024

For her first major exhibition in Scandinavia, the internationally renowned artist Kapwani Kiwanga (b. 1978) explores social mechanisms and power dynamics through large-scale installations of plants, foliage, sand, colour and light. Just below the surface of Kiwanga's seductively beautiful works lurk critical themes. Plants tell toxic stories of power imbalances, colours have manipulative effects and light is investigated as a political instrument.

The Length of the Horizon presents a delicate flower on a pedestal bathed in a vibrant yellow environment. The vivid yellow alludes not only to the sunlight required for a plant to grow, but also to stereotypical representations of cheerful

tropical sunshine. Showcased are Kiwanga's two paper versions of the peacock flower (*Caesalpinia pulcherrima*), with its characteristic green leaves, orange-yellow flowers and long, red stamens. Meticulously rendered at two different stages of growth, they reveal the contrasting historical uses of the flower. Reputed to induce abortion, the decorative plant was a means of resistance and self-determination for people living in the conditions of slavery and indigenous populations in Suriname. Beautifully crafted in paper, Kiwanga's work alludes also to a pastime in Victorian England, where women of means would craft paper flowers, to decorate their homes. Spotlighting this ornamental plant, Kiwanga lays bare the stark contrast in living conditions between women in imperial England and those living in a colonial territory like Suriname.

Stretching across CC's two biggest halls and 1600 m² of space, the exhibition unfolds in a flow created by Kiwanga's elegant handling of materials and their secrets. With her affinity for captivating, non-static experiences, the artist proposes fluidity as a sculptural principle in works permeated with the idea of continuous re-creation and adaptability.

Kiwanga, who has a degree in anthropology and comparative religion, makes poetic work exploring how objects detached from their original function are given new life in the exhibition space. Handled and displayed, they are distanced from their everyday use and their place in production.

Another work puts up walls of colour forming a 16-metre-long corridor. A recurring motif in Kiwanga's art is disciplinary architecture – spaces designed to influence human behaviour. One section of the large installation *pink-blue* is painted in the colour known as Baker-Miller Pink. Purportedly reducing stress and lowering the heart rate, the colour has been used to calm prison inmates. The other section is bathed in blue fluorescent light of the kind installed in public restrooms to make veins harder to see and drugs more difficult to inject. The light is indirectly a tool for surveilling public spaces. In the installation, visitors feel these disorienting effects on their own bodies.

Kapwani Kiwanga knows how to entice aesthetically. The artist's works offer one the opportunity to go beyond the sensual and visual appreciation to engage with historical sociopolitical dimensions, doubling the effect and giving Kiwanga's works a lasting impact.

This exhibition is created in partnership with Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg in Germany. It is accompanied by a comprehensive, richly illustrated catalogue in Danish and English, featuring essays by Cecilia Alemani, Uta Ruhkamp, Julie Pellegrin, Andreas Beitin and Marie Laurberg. The catalogue is distributed internationally by Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König, and is available in CC's shop.

Hall 3

Cathrine Raben Davidsen

Let Everything Happen to You

26 January – 12 May 2024

In Hall 3, more than 130 paintings and drawings show new sides of the Danish artist Cathrine Raben Davidsen's (b. 1972) distinctive and impactful work. *Let Everything Happen to You* is the most comprehensive retrospective exhibition of Raben Davidsen's art to date.

Spanning the artist's three most important periods – the mid-1990s (1995–1998), the 2010s (2015–2017) and the present – the exhibition reveals a less familiar, more personally rooted side of Raben Davidsen's work, shaped by experiences of loss, the search for identity and transformation.

Known for her poetic, dream-like, vibrant visual language, Raben Davidsen, in a nearly 30-year career, has developed a singular expression moving between myth and history, light and darkness, reality and fantasy across time, space and stylistic genres. *Let Everything Happen to You* combines raw, atmospheric drawings, in charcoal, oil and ink, with lavishly layered oil paintings large and small. The subject matter ranges from intimate portraits (including two self-portraits) to abstract landscapes, mythological and religious narratives and figures transforming from one state to another. At the heart of her work is the artistic treatment of humanity and personal experience.

For the first time ever, visitors can experience some of Raben Davidsen's earliest works, including her 1996 series *Family*. Executed in a raw, psychological style, the series portrays her family, childhood and teenage years, including the loss of her father to AIDS when she was 13. Over the course of the 2010s, Raben Davidsen shifts her focus from personal explorations to more universal questions of human existence and connection, along with the concept of metamorphosis. The exhibition title is a line from a 1905 poem, *Go to the Limits of Your Longing*, by the Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke. The poem describes the unbearable but ultimately inescapable combination of beauty and suffering at the heart of human life and history.

The exhibition presents a number of new paintings made especially for the exhibition at CC. Based on topical news images from war zones around the world, the paintings with tremendous sensitivity depict ruined landscapes and bodies disfigured by war.

A leading figure in her generation of Danish artists, Raben Davidsen has developed a singular artistic language clearly grounded in the classical tradition. Throughout her career, she has marched to the beat of her own drum. Her work has been collected by world stars like Bruce Springsteen, Liv Tyler and Sofia Coppola.

This exhibition is the first comprehensive presentation of Raben Davidsen's paintings at a Copenhagen institution in more than a decade. Featured is also a recently produced film portrait providing an up-close and personal look at the artist and the process behind her work.

In 2022, Cathrine Raben Davidsen was the first ever recipient of the Beckett Prize, established and awarded at CC that year.

Learn more about the artists here:

About Kapwani Kiwanga

Kapwani Kiwanga (b. Hamilton, Canada) is French and Canadian, she lives and works in Paris. Kiwanga studied Anthropology and Comparative Religion at McGill University in Montreal and Art at l'école des Beaux-Arts de Paris.

Kiwanga's work traces the pervasive impact of power asymmetries by placing historic narratives in dialogue with contemporary realities, the archive, and tomorrow's possibilities. Her work is research-driven, instigated by marginalised or forgotten histories, and articulated across a range of materials and mediums including sculpture, installation, photography, video, and performance. Kiwanga co-opts the canon; she turns systems of power back on themselves, in art and in parsing broader histories. In this manner Kiwanga has developed an aesthetic vocabulary that she described as "exit strategies," works that invite one to see things from multiple perspectives so as to look differently at existing structures and find ways to navigate the future differently.

In 2022, Kiwanga received the Zurich Art Prize (CH). She was also the winner of the Marcel Duchamp Prize (FR) in 2020, Frieze Artist Award (USA) and the annual Sobey Art Award (CA) in 2018. She will represent Canada at the 60th International Venice Art Biennale in 2024. Solo exhibitions include Serralves Foundation, Porto (PR); Bozar, Brussels (BE); Remai Modern, Saskatoon (CA); Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg (DE); Capc, Bordeaux (FR); MOCA, Toronto (CA); Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich (CH); New Museum, New York (USA); State of Concept, Athens (GR); Moody Center for the Arts, Austin (USA); Haus der Kunst, Munich (DE); Kunsthaus Pasquart, Biel/Bienne (CHE); MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge (USA); Albertinum museum, Dresden (DE); Esker Foundation, Calgary (CA); Power Plant, Toronto (CA); Logan Center for the Arts, Chicago (USA); South London Gallery, London (UK) and Jeu de Paume, Paris (FR) among others. She is represented by Galerie Poggi, Paris; Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, Cape Town and London and Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin.

About Cathrine Raben Davidsen

Cathrine Raben Davidsen was born in 1972 in Copenhagen, Denmark. She graduated from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in 2003, having previously studied at art academies in Italy and the Netherlands.

Raben Davidsen has exhibited widely in Denmark and abroad, in solo and group shows including *Oracle* at the Rudolph Tegner Museum and Statue Park (2023), *Hybrid* at the Museum of Religious Art (2023), *Den Mindste Sten* in the Montana Room at Gl. Strand (2023), *Cosmic Mind* at CCA Andratx (2022), *Grafik 1998-*

2022 at Kastrupgårdsamlingen (2022), *FED LER* at Gl. Holtegaard (2021), *Totem* at Clay Keramikmuseum Danmark (2020) and *Kenosis* at Horsens Art Museum (2016).

She has executed commissions for the New Carlsberg Foundation, the Carlsberg Academy, the City of Copenhagen, Nimb and others. Her work is in the collections of numerous museums and institutions, including the National Gallery of Denmark, Horsens Art Museum, Trapholt Museum of Modern Art and Design, Kunsten Museum of Modern Art Aalborg, the Museum of Religious Art, Kastrupgårdsamlingen, Vendsyssel Art Museum, Vejle Art Museum, Art Foundation Mallorca, the New Carlsberg Foundation and the Danish Arts Council.

Over her career, Raben Davidsen has received a number of awards and grants, including the Anne Marie Telmányi, née Carl Nielsen, Honorary Grant (2015), the HH Bruun Honorary Grant (2014) and a grant from the Niels Wessel Bagge Art Foundation (2009).

In 2015, Raben Davidsen was appointed Knight of the Order of Dannebrog by Her Majesty Queen Margrethe.

About Icon Vision

Icon Visions' aesthetic expression is rooted in nostalgia, youth, and pop culture. The brand has contributed to shaping identities for musicians and artists, offering a fresh and youthful alternative in the fashion world.

Icon Visions has crafted new silhouettes inspired by iconic, classical styles. The explorative realm of a teenager's room, vibrant subcultures, and online trends come together to form the distinctive expression of Icon Visions.

***The Length of the Horizon* is supported by:**

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