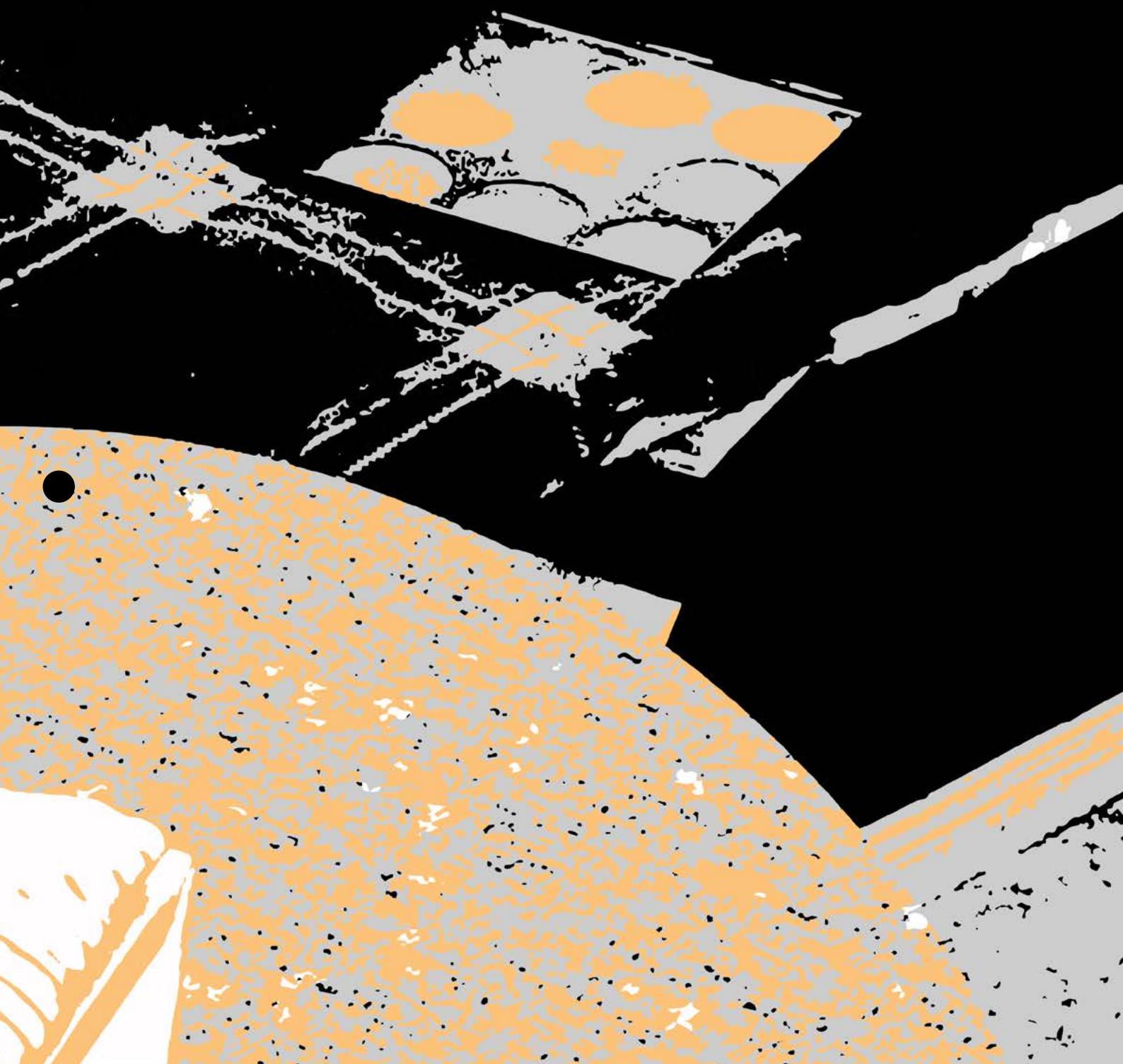


Hannover uerspil





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Carl Mannov
Kammerspil (Chamber Play)
Exhibition period: 04.06.2021 – 25.07.2021

O – Overgaden,
Overgaden neten vandet 17, 1414 København K,
overgaden.org

Kammerspil • (Chamber Play)

A PLAY OF CHAMBERS

The young, Danish artist Carl Mannov—around whose practice this publication circulates, prompted by his summer 2021 show at Overgaden—operates in the murky waters of unapologetic assemblage. Whether in sculpture, painting, or on paper, he collects a rich, eclectic mixture of references spanning surrealism, theatrical aesthetics (uncovering his upbringing in a theatrical milieu), classical furniture carpentry (typical for the Nordic region), and our increasingly digital everyday life.

Under these sculptural gestures runs a deep interest in what's in store for us or, more accurately, what's in the heavy cultural backpack with which Scandinavians travel? And, even more importantly, how is it that—when this stuffed rucksack is unpacked and its contents are put into the grinding machinery called “visual art”—these things all of a sudden become mysterious, as if there exists a deep clue within them? Why is it that everyone believes the artistic thing is an, “exhibit a” or in other words, actually a perfect proof of something hidden beneath or beyond its physical appearance?

Behind Mannov’s show at Overgaden, the artist’s first institutional solo show in Denmark, there lies exactly this crime scene of contemporary art. Here hovers the weird play, the make-up, masquerade, or *Kammerspil (Chamber Play)*, as the title of Mannov’s show points out, where any audience member becomes an Agatha Christie figure in the hunt for clues, solving the riddle of the artwork, understanding the depths of the artistic mystery.

Quite literally constructed around a “(crime) scene” or stage, in the form of a wall-to-wall carpeted platform in the institution’s old, majestic columned hall, Mannov’s tableau at Overgaden includes a series of wooden drawers. These are scattered on the “stage” alongside pieces of clothing, as if someone had hastily emptied a dresser, potentially incriminating themselves in the process; yet having left an imprint of their hand, as not only the criminal does, but also, always, of course, the artist. In this theatrical space, the drama of the slippery slope from crime or disguise to artistic performance or artwork is played out. When is something fake, when real, when good, when bad?

As with any artist, Mannov is a criminal, and his exhibition goes smooth on to explore and unpick the troubles of the secretive on to the the archetypal or ghostly puppeteer behind the artwork is beautifully alluded to in a new series of video works employing YouTube footage fetishizing folding methods of clothing (read: Marie Kondo), yet the hands have been removed and online Reddit chats have become the subtitles to the soothing female voices instructing the garment folding. Someone is behind this, whether behind anonymous names in the chatroom or behind the work of art, doing the work, pulling the strings. Mannov asks wherein lies the bewitching and, hence, artistic magic; and are there any true artistic objects when most sculptures are hollow casts (as drawers or cupboards) only pretending to be solid, putting the swirling, oscillating display of different degrees from artistic to online performances under scrutiny—a play of chambers—a *kammerspil*—from extreme exposure, online or onstage, to anxious withdrawal into closets, private cabinets.

Rhea Dall
Director, Ooovergaden

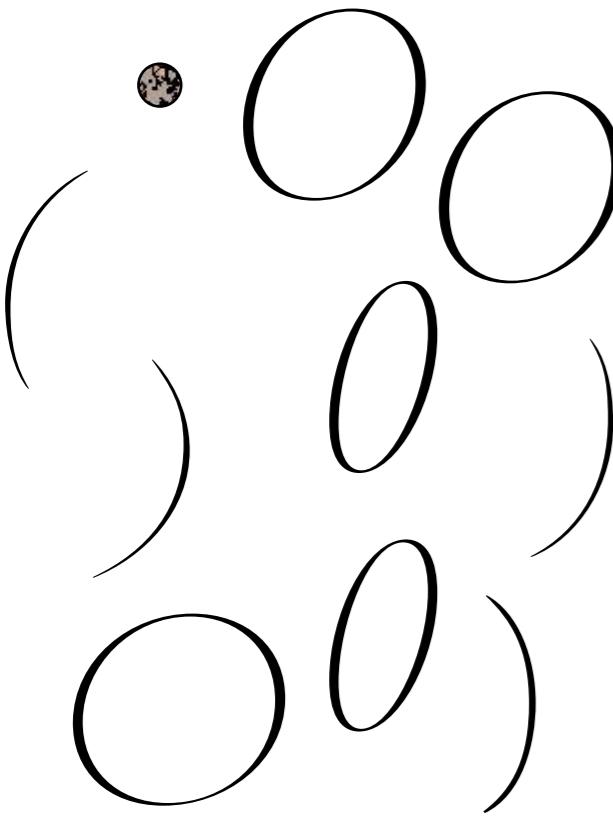
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This publication—which revolves around Carl Mannov’s exhibition *Kammerspil* at Overgaden—is one of the first in a new monographic series produced in conjunction with our institutional solo exhibitions from 2021 onwards, focusing on new artistic voices in the Danish art scene and, hopefully, on catapulting these into a larger readership, following, and distribution, as is well deserved.

Each edition in the series will be published both in print, with a special, grand fold-out poster as its cover, and in a free-to-download PDF version, adding a full batch of documentation images to the online edition. Like this, the hope is that the content made possible by these publications—both the artistic expressions and the expanded conversation around these—can travel as far as possible.

The series has been made possible by generous support from the Augustinus Foundation and by the creative and editorial oversight of Overgaden’s editor Nanna Friis, alongside dedicated work by Freja Kir and Miquel Hervás Gómez, our graphic designers at fanfare. Moreover, a great thank you goes to artist and author Melanie Kitti for her poetic contribution, to Lars Nordby, Mannov’s friend and former classmate at the Art Academy in Oslo, for taking part in an intimate conversation with the artist and, of course, to the whole team at Overgaden. Last, but not least, a heartfelt thank you goes to Carl Mannov for the great collaboration.

Rhea Dall (director) & Aukje Lepoutre Ravn (curator)
Oooooovergaden



A SWEATY ECHO CHAMBER FILLED WITH GHOSTS

Lars Nordby & Carl Mannov in conversation

(Lars Nordby)

Kammerspil (*Chamber Play*). This must be the most personal exhibition you’ve produced to date. Perhaps even the most intense, keeping in mind how your Self—figuratively speaking—is confronted by self-reflecting material on the human, all too human. I am pleased that you invited me to have this conversation with you. This is perhaps the first time we’ve made public a subject that we’ve been discussing for some time. Theatricality as a medium is something I’ve researched as part of my artistic practice. And I suppose this is what our conversation revolves around. Relevant, if nothing else, to your exhibition title?

(Carl Mannov)

The title is of course a reference to the theater through my own childhood and my family, who are theater people. That’s one of the reasons I asked if you wanted to contribute to this material. Apart from the fact that you work with the theater yourself, as a concept and material in your artistic practice, I also consider you family. And talking of the intensity of the exhibition, as you said, our families have certain common denominators.

(LN)

That’s probably where the title acquires a different tone. No decent chamber play can be performed without drama, and drama needs desperate actions. This messy exhibition appears, at first glance, to be the result of a desperate action.

(CM)

A crime scene?

(LN)

Actually, I’ve often thought that the metaphor for art as a forensic investigation doesn’t quite tally with what we do. When all is said and done, a detective hunts an objective truth. I’m thinking more of this as a game.

Editor: Nanna Friis
Text: Rhea Dall, Aukje Lepoutre Ravn, Melanie Kitti,
Lars Nordby, Carl Mannov

Translation: Charlotte Lund, Nanna Friis

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And you, of all people, know that all games have their own set of rules, their own logic.

(CM)

Yeah, and a game is also often synonymous with play, and play is perhaps first and foremost about taking things apart and turning them upside down: puncturing reality for a moment and “pretending.”

(LN)

And in the last few years you’ve been playing quite a lot with the home and the private sphere as a frame of reference or material.

(CM)

That’s right. So, formally, the term *Chamber Play* could possibly also reference the play with space or chamber that takes place in the exhibition.

(LN)

So, there’s a method to the madness?

(CM)

The way one expresses oneself is very likely related to how one deals with emotionally charged symptoms, beyond oneself, i.e. how the family and public dictates.

(LN)

Yes, but —

(CM)

The chamber play is a kind of theater, of course, where the performance and the roles are set indoors in a limited homely sphere, but the type of social anxiety that we’ve discussed at length and that you’ve often addressed via the theater and performance as metaphors, takes place outside the home, in the roleplay that emerges when facing the public. Is this where Henrik Ibsen enters the stage?

(LN)

Actually, I’ve never been that keen on theater performances. Nor do I think Ibsen was. When, as an artist, one explores the themes to the extent you mention—the home, the public, the Self, and the Other; their power structures and unconditional complications—the theater as a metaphor fits in nicely. In particular, I find theatricality as a medium in itself and the theater as an idea more fascinating than the conventional meaning of the theater. Theater as a metaphor can be used in a variety of ways and is often used to define or expose certain rules of the game, hidden agendas, and identity formation—in psychology, for example, everyday language, philosophy, the political scene, the cultural sector, etc. Nevertheless, it’s a common denominator in the essence of theater, which feels immortal, even subjugating.

(CM)

Yes, theater is conditional; certain rules apply. A banal point of departure, for example, is the relationship between stage and audience.

(LN)

And this is where I believe Ibsen, and many others besides him, including myself, exploit the notion of theatricality precisely to express these perplexing emotions about conditions that one prefers to avoid or perhaps over-identify with. Even conditions one doesn’t actually know, yet subsequently wants to avoid. If that’s not a form of private and social anxiety, I don’t know what is.

(CM)

That’s exactly why I think one wants to reduce the complexity of it. That’s often what you do when you try to understand something; you construct a small manageable model of it. Like the essence of a theater performance or a film—a simulation of emotion.

(LN)

Exactly. People like to hold on to something, especially when they’re about to lose control. I notice that several of the sculptures in the exhibition have a sort of integrated model of a stage set, or perhaps a doll’s house? Both are tools of sorts, some kind of heuristics with which to navigate complex feelings and social dynamics.

(CM)

I couldn’t have put it better myself.

(LN)

Through my own artistic practice where I explore much of the interhuman action space and man’s obsessive approach to identity, I sense that, in *Kammerspil*, you’re examining the meaning of identity formation and the private sphere as if it were never to reach public attention, hence remaining a bit theatrical? This makes me think of the watercolor series in the exhibition, especially the work *Chamber Play (Steps)*.

(CM)

Yeah, I think I’m into the idea of self-perception as a kind of storytelling to oneself. The painting you mention, *Chamber Play (Steps)*, represents a character about to open or go through a door. To give a symbolic answer, I think a door opened in my work a couple of years ago that transformed the way I use my artistic practice.

(LN)

How?

(CM)

I found the courage to take an inward look and use my own story as material, work with some of my own pain through my work. The door has become a recurrent motif. I see it as a threshold between the private and public spheres, internal and external matter. It’s in this crack, somehow, that social anxiety emerges, something I’ve struggled with second hand, through people very close to me.

(LN)

It's clearly a new side of you we see in this exhibition. Somehow the symbolism has changed from the way the gallery space reflects its own metaphysical nature to a theme outside the gallery space—in your case your private life. Or perhaps it's not a clear-cut change, but rather a combination. At some point you seemed more interested in the administrative functions behind the scenes in the commercial galleries where you show. As a way to unveil the engine room running in the background—trying to come to terms with your own role in the machinery?

(CM)

That's quite true. The installations in this exhibition might be based on this kind of logic.

(LN)

Besides the door appearing in some of the sculptures, the drawer and the stage set could perhaps also be viewed as thresholds of sorts. Both are dichotomies comprising a front and a back: a presented fiction and a secret reality.

Isn't it in the tension between these two that one's identity is negotiated? Perhaps image-making operates in the gap between the external and internal?

(CM)

That actually fits quite well with how I see the watercolors for this exhibition. They're pictures rather than paintings, which I think is a way of thinking that I hadn't permitted myself to the same extent earlier.

(LN)

In a pictorial space, there's a short distance between the concept, or inner atmospheric image, to an outer representation of it.

(CM)

Yes, especially a line. So, those drawings have been a very direct way for me to express the ideas for this exhibition and play around with them.

(LN)

A kind of mental notes.

(CM)

It's a good feeling to free oneself from the specific rules one sets oneself and just let go. Nevertheless, I must admit that I also sense a great freedom when I finally discover a fixed framework to hold on to.

(LN)

Yeah, the fixed framework for these paintings is literally their frame or passe-partout. Besides, by inserting text and picture materials from books—likely sources of inspiration—directly into the works, you're also painting onto the passe-partout. It reminds me of the kind of corrections and sketches found in the margins, or directly on the pages of a treasured book. That's probably the most direct and honest expression,

I can imagine. It's often very private and instinctive—more so than a diary where you often play a performative role, although one would be hard-pushed to admit it. Like seeing yourself from the outside and playing a role—in writing.

(CM)

Well, yes, notes are different. It's a window into the head of someone in the process of understanding something and needing to express it outside themselves to find the meaning. That's not unlike the way I think about my own artistic production—it's a sandpit where I can play and try out things I don't fully understand.

(LN)

I agree. I don't get any kicks from dutiful and useful art. Such information centers are quickly constructed completely with glass, transparent all over. In a sense, Kammerspil breaks with the idea that sculptures must be raw and "honest" processual experiences.

When, in an exhibition, one sees a casually arranged installation on the floor consisting of seemingly randomly placed objects, it is usually far more complex and thick with intention than the artist lets on. This is where the concept of function comes in, I guess?

(CM)

Yes. I try to embed the idea or anticipation of function into an object, only to undermine it. It's one way of protesting usefulness. It's not that the work must not be useful, as such, for example, by triggering a feeling or a dialogue, but that it shouldn't have to be.

(LN)

You mean, as a rule?

(CM)

I think every project sets its own rules. To use your own artistic production to work through things in your own life, for example, could well be interesting, but mainly when with a larger, more public resonating dialogue.

(LN)

Otherwise, you risk it becoming an echo?

(CM)

Well, I like the frame of reference for an exhibition to be porous and able to morph into other dialogues and interpretations.

(LN)

Then it's probably also the case that if you make an exhibition interesting and try to avoid this personal echo, you will risk the exhibition becoming theatrical.

(CM)

True. The paradox is often that the more personal and idiosyncratic a project, the more intensely relatable it can seem to the receiver.

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(LN)

I like the idea that the passive artwork is more interactive than one thinks, and that art is not there to think for you. In that way, I think this personal expression, this echo, also has something to offer, and that it should continue to be so.

(CM)

It's a bit like the comedian using half the time practicing the lead-in to and delivery of their jokes so that everything appears as casual and improvised as possible. This exhibition is perhaps an attempt at puncturing that facade and admitting that it's a kind of performance.

(LN)

It becomes a triple bluff, a twofold self-reflection, mainly because we also create new facades while exposing ourselves. I think the videos Gespenst-gestik (Ghost—Gesture) in the exhibition are about that, in part. Is it important that they're made of video and textual material lifted from the nooks and crannies of YouTube and the internet forum Reddit, or is this a desperate attempt at actualizing something which is perhaps essentially timeless?

(CM)

It's difficult to reflect on self-image and performativity without including the internet and the spectrum it has created between extreme anonymity and extreme self-exposure.

(LN)

One shouldn't be an extremist... and as for the word spectrum—and, for that matter, anonymity—the title primarily sparks the idea of the ghost as an invisible actor.

(CM)

Which is often the role played by a visual artist.

(LN)

Historically, ghosts have also been viewed as a confrontation with one's own past—a trauma.

(CM)

Exactly. This is one instance where I believe a bridge emerges between the videos and the sculptures in the exhibition because storage furniture, such as cupboards and drawers, is often used in therapy as a metaphor for memory and the storage of recollections and traumas.

(LN)

It's mentioned in one of the videos, via the anonymous comments you found on Reddit, that ghosts portrayed in both films and literature often show their presence by violently opening drawers and cupboards and slamming doors. It almost becomes a double metaphor for the trauma that emerges.

(CM)

It seems there's often a need for physical things to act as metaphors for the conceptual, linguistic. Probably

because physicality came before language. I see this as a kind of defense of sculpture and one of the reasons you can never address it directly, only indirectly.

(LN)

I agree. It's experience, a trigger, a thoughtful gaze. Since I learn something new about myself and nuance my practice virtually every time I complete a new exhibition, I'll never be able to fully describe what I really do.

(CM)

In this way, we constantly open doors that we also ask viewers to open and our own practice.

(LN)

A sweaty echo chamber filled with ghosts.

(CM)

Sounds like Bobi Bar on a wet evening.

(CM & LN)

/Laugh]

(LN)

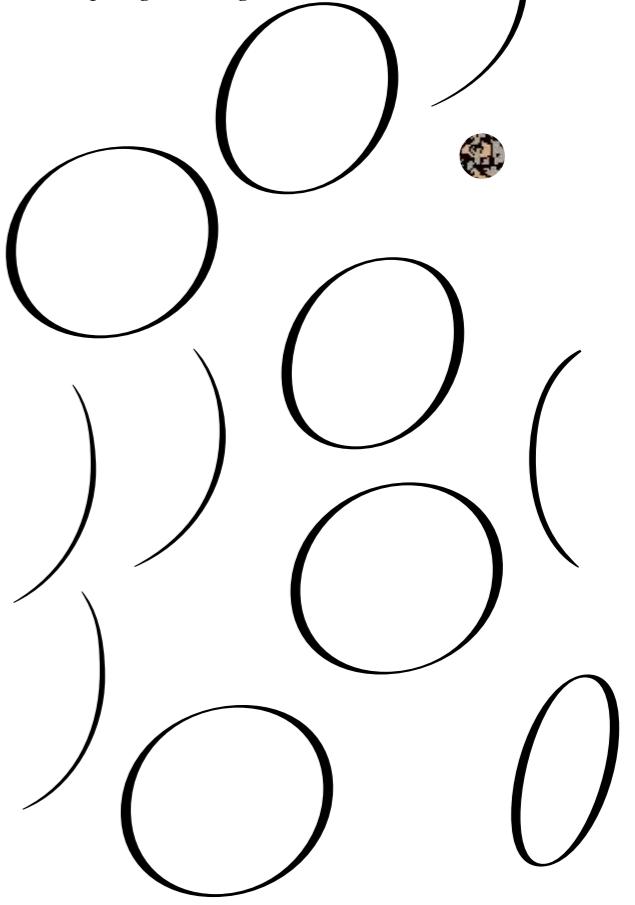
That's been a setting for many a dialogue over time. When you're in good company...

(CM)

... and have gotten enough liquid courage in you to dig a little deeper.

(LN)

Perhaps a good image to finish on.



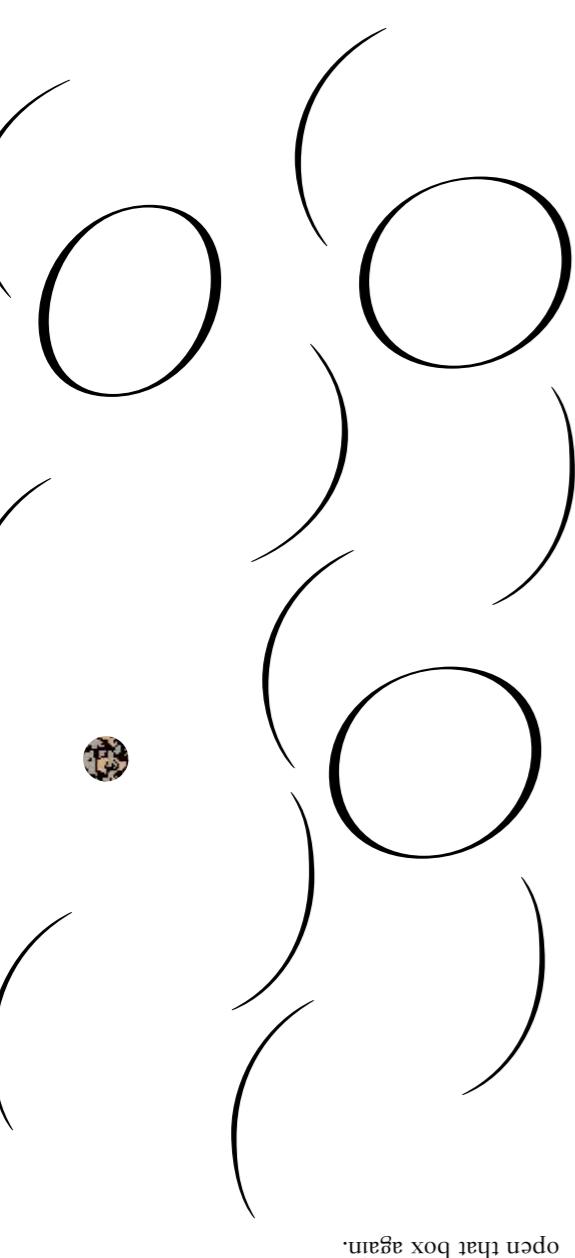
K AND LUN

I have re-spelled my name
Lun
the walls.
shutters inside the
house one can see
melody that Lun will never
forget. Lun opens
all the shutters. Behind the
shutters inside the
house one can see

folded. K stores the paper in the box under the bed.
K folds out the paper. Carefully, K re-folds the paper.
K bows down and picks up a folded piece of paper.
K folds out the paper. Carefully, K re-folds the paper.
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Melanie Kitti



K and Lun unfold all the sheets. K and Lun carefully fold the sheets again. K and Lun fold the sheets in a way they have never before been folded. K and Lun never put all the sheets back in the box. K and Lun never open that box again.

(rolls Lun's eyes)

L

I remember a ship sailing in the dusk.

K

L

Lun

K is dreaming that K will meet a furred fish. K keeps gasping, in K's dream and on the couch. The fish

makes K feel safe. Later on in the dream, K meets K

on a gravel road. K is carefully holding onto two eggs.

In K's right hand is a dark brown egg. In K's left

hand is a white egg. There are evenly tiny red dots on

the white egg. K who meets K is also holding onto

two eggs. K wakes up from the dream. K is dreaming

that K will have never before been folded. K and Lun never

put all the sheets back in the box. K and Lun never

open that box again.

Don't ask me.

God

I really have to concentrate now. Can we talk

L

Can you actually capture the stone age on camera?

K

K and Lun walk towards the same room. A room containing several boxes. K draws out one of the boxes. There are folded flannel sheets in the box.

K

I just won't go out. But unfortunately, that has never happened. If it should happen I guess I would just take it as it comes.

it as it comes.

than a regular pill. It is flat like a cutlet.

(whispering) The Moon pill. It is bigger

than a regular pill. It is flat like a cutlet.

the sky. Lun opens Lun's firsts. On Lun's right palm

Lun closes Lun's eyes. Lun raises Lun's arms towards

the hallway and opens the door. Lun goes out in

the doorway and stands outside the door.

The doorbell is ringing. Lun gets up. Lun goes out in

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KUCH LUN Melanie Kirti

LUNCH

Carl Mannov vil særligt takke:
Ea Mannov og Niels Jørgensen

The image is a large, abstract drawing of a face. The face has a wide, open mouth at the top and a single, dark, textured eye on the right side. The rest of the face is composed of various handwritten lyrics from the song 'K'. These lyrics include:

- (Viskar) Ska vi svara K?
- En kropp
- Jag tror inte det.
- En annan kropp
- Sin vänstra hand framför sin mun. En annan kropp
- Förbi! Förbi! i längre tid. En annan kropp förbi! så till
- Skyminingen stannar längre utanför hemmet än på
- Kropparna var till sist. Gud och skyminingen kommer här
- Skyminingen kommer. När skyminingen kommer här
- Andra pläster. Skyminingen pressar sig mot hemmet.
- Skyminingen tränger in genom hemmets sprickor.
- K och Lun går mot samma rum. Ett rum med flera
- Länder i. K drar ut en av läderna. Det ligger hopviskta
- Jag mätte verkligen koncentrera mig nu. Kan vi prata
- L
- Om det scenario?
- K
- Jag kommer ihåg när det seglade ett skepp på
- skyminingen.
- L
- Fraga in te mig.
- Gud
- K
- Kan man egentligen fångas stenläderin
- På kamraren
- Viskar Man-
- tabletter. Den är storre än en
- Vanlig tablert.
- Den är plat som en kölert.
- Lun
- K drommar om att K möter en stor flick med päls. K
- Fiskens hela tiden, i drömmen och i soffan.
- Det ringger på dörrklockan. Lun reser sig upp. Lun går
- samma kropparna som satt framför lunnen.
- Det till hallen och öppnar dörren. Utanför dörren står de
- glaspar
- hela tiden, i drömmen och i soffan.
- K väcker ur drömmen K drömmer just nu. K vaknar
- som möter sig själv håller också i tva ägg.
- Mötta sig själv på en grusväg. K håller
- mörkbrunt ägg. I den vänstra handen ligger det ett vit
- forsikrigt i tva ägg. I den högra handen ligger det
- ägg. Det är små, smä röda fläckar på det vita ägget. K
- Ett av kropparna tappar sitt ägg på trappan utanför
- Lun och Kroppen ser varandra i ögonen. Lun rycker
- på ögonbynen. Lun slutar att rycka på ögonbynen.
- Lun rycker på ögonbynen. Lun slutar att rycka på
- ögonbynen. Lun rycker på ögonbynen.
- K spärrar upp sina ögon. K sitter sig upp i soffan.
- K öppnar en liten burk som står på soffan.
- Det kan handa att någon längst borta spelar
- melodin som K nyttade på. Men även om
- Lun aldrig kommer göra några melodi in så kommer
- växer det två gräddbruna horn.
- K planterar ett frö i sin vänstra timme.
- bukten liggande det från. K planterar ett frö i sin högra
- timme. K planterar ett frö i sin vänstra timme.
- Lun aldrig har satt upp sina ögon.

Kamnenski

Mannos udstilling på Øvergåden er, ganske i husets gamle salgsal. På scenen spredt serie af træskuffer side om side, ligesom en med bunker af tøj, som om nogen i har tømt skufferne, men alligevel er kommet til at efterlade et håndaffyldt - hvilket jo ikke kun den værk. Hvor der noget flask, hvor der det vilkærligt, skal der godt, hvor der dertil gør. For at undresagle og udholde, kunstneren smooth criminal - og hans udstilling setter sig netop anden kunstner cr Mannov en trecent forrydcr - en Vi ser YouTubeklip, der dækker ved sysicmaisk retoucheren eller usynliggjort - og Redditt-chats udgør usynlig) instruerer tegnoldningerne. Nogen står bag det her - om det er bag foldningerne, de anonyme chantanavne eller bag værket. Nogen laver arabidct, nogen trækker rundt og dermed den kunstneriske magi? Findes der noget i tradene. Mannov sporger: hvori liggter forhækselsen (som snedkcrede er hule astroblæser, der skuffet eller skabte) legge med karmre eller sande kunstobjekter, når de fleste skulpturer være massivt? På rum og blot foregiver at illusoriske gradbøjsimge af den kunstneriske rum eller kabmetter - de mange *Kammerspil* - performance under luf - den leg med de mange kunstneriske der spander fra ekstrem eksponering, online eller på (kunst)scenen, til den angstryldte tilbagetrækning ind i de private rum eller gemakker.

Omge, danske kunstner Carl Mannow -	prakserne publikation omkræder,	forsættende af Mannows udstilling	Overgaden i sommeren 2021 - bæveræger sig i	sæssembleragten gæstgrummede vand: Om det gælder hans	kunstner, maleri eller værk på papir bruger Mannow	en rig, eklectisk blandning af reference, der pennduleter	ud og kulturelle rygsæk, som skandinavisk bæger	udt på? Og mørke endnu vigtigere: når denne	væskaat pakkes ud - når døns midhold hældes ned i drik	naskinnet, som vi kælder "billdekunst" - hvoridan kan	om om de er helt særlige spor eller ledetråde mod	ogget mere? Hvorfor torer vi alle sammen på, at et	unstværk er et stykke bevismateriale på, at noget	klujler sig bagved dets fysiske formning.	Mannows udstilling på Overgaden	er kunstnerens forste institutionelle	soloudstilling i Danmark - liggec	ræcis	detre fokus på samtidskunsten som	græmingssted. Dgr. fokusres på det besynderlige	Kammerspillet (som udstillingens titel paa), hvor	ekatærc, den maskrade, den leg eller det	ekskueren bliver en Agatha Christie-figur i jagten på at	pklaare kunstmarkeds gæde.
Det er også et stort spørsmål om, hvad vi har i vente: hvad fylder i den	udsprøjtede vægtsmælk, som skandinavisk bæger	udt på?	Og mørke endnu vigtigere: når denne	væskaat pakkes ud - når døns midhold hældes ned i drik	naskinnet, som vi kælder "billdekunst" - hvoridan kan	om om de er helt særlige spor eller ledetråde mod	ogget mere? Hvorfor torer vi alle sammen på, at et	unstværk er et stykke bevismateriale på, at noget	klujler sig bagved dets fysiske formning.	Mannows udstilling på Overgaden	er kunstnerens forste institutionelle	soloudstilling i Danmark - liggec	ræcis	detre fokus på samtidskunsten som	græmingssted. Dgr. fokusres på det besynderlige	Kammerspillet (som udstillingens titel paa), hvor	ekatærc, den maskrade, den leg eller det	ekskueren bliver en Agatha Christie-figur i jagten på at	pklaare kunstmarkeds gæde.					
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Carl M
Kamm

