

OVERGADEN.

Press release
April 2009

China Shop. State of Emergency

Replacement Migration - Portraits from the 21st Century

Exhibition period: 25 April 2009 – 14 June 2009

Opening: Friday 24 April 2009, 5-8pm

Overgaden is pleased to present two exiting exhibitions this spring, each in its own way revolving around the experience of other cultures as seen in the perspective of Danish everyday life and, conversely, the portrayal of the domestic condition through a foreign gaze.

China Shop. State of Emergency

Many Danes' idea of China is composed of impressions from e.g. cheap merchandise from Chinese shops, China's position in relation to environment, democracy and human rights, the images from the massacre at Tiananmen Square, the rice paper lamps in the nursery, the Mao shoes from Irma, the television transmissions from the Olympic Games in Beijing and the bamboo shoots in the take-away menu. The group show *China Shop. State of Emergency* is a discussion of China as cultural phenomenon and political world power on a global market in the throes of a depression, construed by a number of Danish artists in an everyday perspective.

The exhibition takes the form of a shop, a shopping street and a square, featuring Chinese crisis events, so-called Assemblies, throughout the exhibition period. At the same time, the exhibition will be subjected to a 'set of rules' reflecting the control experienced on a daily basis by millions of Chinese – in the eyes of the Western world, at least. One place in the exhibition you are forbidden to meet, one place you are obliged to move in a specific way, one place you are not allowed to look at the work, because you must face east etc.

On a deeper level, the curators – the visual artists Tomas Lagermand Lundme and Kristina Ask – seek to focus on the concept of a state of exception as a crisis situation in which the normal condition is suspended and must be renegotiated. Occasioned by the 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989 and the present financial crisis, the crisis situation is closely investigated, both as a danger and as a possibility. According to a Chinese proverb: "The true nature of the crisis is to wait for possibilities to arise". *China Shop. State of Emergency* forms a scenography designed to foster such possibilities, to find clues, loosen knots and connect money, sports, television and politics.

The exhibition is not static, and knowledge will be produced and collected along the way. The works will change character continually, and the Assemblies will feature a copious programme including performances, tea salons, lectures and debates, a sale of crisis jars and noodle soup kitchen. As always at Overgaden, the events will form an integrated part of the exhibition and serve both as works and as presentational materials to be seen, heard, tasted, felt, recollected and contemplated. In other words, we hereby urge you to turn up for the events along the way if you want to have the full benefit of the show.

Participating artists: Kristina Ask, Jens Haaning, Jens Hultquist, Huskegruppen (Peter Brandt and Tomas Lagermand Lundme), Frans Jacobi, Tanja Rau & Olof Olsson, Lars Rank and Mette Winckelmann.

Replacement Migration - Portraits from the 21st Century

Malene Nors Tardrup (b. 1974) presents her first major solo exhibition. In the photographic series *Replacement Migration*, she portrays a number of Europeans living in the Arab world and people from the Middle East who have taken up residence in Europe. All the participants have grown up in their native country and thus they have brought their own cultural backgrounds with them.

We meet them partly in a public place in their new homeland to which they have a special relation and partly in their homes - in the private sphere they have created around their lives. For some, it is clearly important to add personal touches to their home and make it a safe and familiar base where they can escape the hustle and bustle that surrounds them, whereas others use the vivacity and unfamiliarity of the city to unwind and primarily consider their home a place to sleep at night.

Each portrait is accompanied by a short text in which the participants describe their experience of penetrating the surface of an unfamiliar city, getting to know it and making it one's own. The portraits focus on the individual person's way of integrating into a new culture, highlighting the multiplicity and variation in the meetings with the foreign world. The works raise a number of fundamental questions concerning cultural exchange and changing identities: What is a home? How does the cultural transformation unfold when a person relocates from one country to another? How much of the old identity must be replaced, and how much can you keep? What are the differences and similarities between the challenges faced by Europeans moving to the Middle East and Arabs moving to Europe?

The exhibition's second photo series *Tuh Azzip* consists of photos of the Giza pyramids in Egypt. Here, as opposed to the romanticised images of the pyramids we find in tourist booklets complete with sand and camels, the observer has taken one step backwards in order to include and reveal the whole commercial setting of the pyramids. One of the pictures is taken out of the window in a Pizza Hut restaurant, and the laterally reversed writing on the window pane – *Tuh Azzip* – appears as a vaguely Arab-sounding headline for the experience: A gaze from a Western point of view, surveying the staging of a cultural core-symbol. In the attempt to get to know each other, one culture mirrors itself in the other. In both photo series, then, the exhibition considers cultural identity, differences and common dilemmas in the meeting between 'them' and 'us'.

Friday 24 April 11am, Overgaden invites the press and other interested parties to join us for a walk-and-talk where it will be possible to meet the artists and hear them talk about the exhibitions. To arrange an interview, please contact Helle Brøns at hb@overgaden.org or at tel. +45 3257 7273. High resolution press photos are available at our website: www.overgaden.org under 'press' and 'upcoming exhibitions'.

Overgaden Institute for Contemporary Art is supported by The Danish Arts Council's Committee for Visual Art.

Overgaden.

Institute of Contemporary Art
Overgaden Neden Vandet 17
DK-1414 Copenhagen K

Web: www.overgaden.org
Mail: info@overgaden.org
Tel. +45 3257-7273

Tuesday - Sunday: 1 pm - 5 pm, Thursday: 1 pm - 8 pm. Free admittance

Press photos

Billedet taget fra bussen på vej til Den forbrudte
By ↗



From the holiday album: Red Lamps, lacquer decoration and traditional Chinese architecture between the high-rise buildings in the city. The picture is taken through a bus window by a tourist who, in passing, has found a match for her notions of what is particularly the Chinese about China. The exhibition *China Shop. State of Emergency* is a debating and engaging group show ranging from a direct, playful fascination with China to political and economic reflections on this world power on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre and the 60th anniversary of Mao Zedong's foundation of the People's Republic.



»I can see my kitchen garden from my window of our apartment. I come in the garden as often as I can. In the summer my family and I spend most of our time there. It is like a small world in itself.

Rajah born in Morocco, lives in Copenhagen, Denmark

Malene Nors Tardrup's *Replacement Migration - Portraits from the 21st Century* presents a number of people who have chosen to settle in a foreign country. Here they tell about their personal experiences with integration and changing identities. The private spaces they open for us stir the imagination and invite us to identify with the portrayed and to expand on the stories they tell.

Overgaden.

Institute of Contemporary Art
Overgaden Neden Vandet 17
DK-1414 Copenhagen K

Web: www.overgaden.org
Mail: info@overgaden.org
Tel. +45 3257-7273

Tuesday - Sunday: 1 pm - 5 pm, Thursday: 1 pm - 8 pm. Free admittance