

Peter Louis-Jensen 1961

Opening: Friday 20 May 2016, 5-7pm

Duration: 21 May – 25 June 2016

Curated by Lennart Gottlieb

Peter Louis-Jensen is a key figure in the formation of the Danish avant-garde of the 1960ies. As a member right from the start of the Experimental Art School his innovative and uncompromising creativity inspired and influenced other members such as Poul Gernes, Per Kirkeby and John Davidsen.

During the year leading up to the start of the Experimental Art School in October 1961, Peter Louis-Jensen created works anticipating important parts of the Ex-Schools ideals and attitudes in the years to come. These works form this exhibition and though they might be small in number and moderate in scale, they are grand in every other aspect considering their originality and historical significance. Among the works are Fragments – comprised by two striped parts, a square and a rectangle, designed to hang awry and separated – as well as strikingly original perspectival Op art-like paintings (before Op art) in three and four parts with their vanishing points lying on the bare wall between or outside the painted parts. On display is also Louis-Jensen's final work before joining the Ex-School, a cool and deliberate attack on painting as such in the shape of a piece of white-painted masonite board pierced by rows of drilled holes.

Radical and uncompromising as they were, Louis-Jensen's early works were rejected at Kunsternes Efterårs-udstilling (The Artists' Autumn Exhibition) 1961 and the striped paintings on display at Kunsternes Sommerudstilling (The Artists' Summer Exhibition) 61 were described by art critic Gunnar Jespersen as "hollow effects, posh paraphernalia from the fringes of the art world." However, the other members of the Experimental Art School regarded Louis-Jensen's pre-Ex-School works differently and three out of the very few works of 1961 were acquired by members of the Ex-School during its active years.

Accompanying the exhibition, the book "Peter Louis-Jensen 1961" (Forlaget Bangsbohave 48 pages, DKK 98) by the curator of this exhibition, art historian, dr.phil. Lennart Gottlieb will be released. Gottlieb walks us through the works, tracing their sources of inspiration and Louis-Jensen's thoughts of 'entering the third dimension, the dimension of space, the mystery of space' as well as his fatigue with "'painters': Smearing canvasses, kneading clay," as he mockingly worded his disdain.

Many thanks to all lenders and a special thanks for the cooperation to Simon Louis-Jensen and Lennart Gottlieb. None of the exhibited works are for sale.

Peter Louis-Jensen (1941-99). Debut at Kunsternes Efterårsudstilling (The Artists' Autumn Exhibition) 1961. Ex-school 1961-68. Retrospective exhibition at Vestsjællands Kunstmuseum (now Sorø Kunstmuseum) 2003. There are works by Peter Louis-Jensen in the collections of ARoS, Brandts, Museum Jorn, Sorø Kunstmuseum and SMK – National Gallery of Denmark.