

# CAIRO NIELS NEDERGÅRD

**Opening: Friday 25.11. 2016 5-8 pm**

Duration: 25.11 – 17.12. 2016

The Danish artist Niels Nedergård lived in Cairo between 1979 and 1986. To be more specific in the ottoman house Beit el-Suheimi built in 1668. Filling up his two studios in the east wing on 3<sup>rd</sup> floor with pictures in strong colours in contrast to the ochreous walls and the light filtered through the mushrabeiya windows. Exactly at this location was the Islamic geometry making a profound impression on the idiom and artistic creation of Niels Nedergård. Before his stay in Cairo, he had worked with compositions of the primary colours as of light and space. Bringing this experience to Cairo, Nedergård created a new play in the patterns of Cairo. By copying a net of lines and filling it with strong neon colours, occurred a process of simplifying the ornaments, and thereafter making them complex anew. But the coloration was not just taken from the 1980ies western art scene. The colours are to be found in the Sufis, who in ecstasies gets in contact with the divine through a connection between the intellectual and the sensory feelings – and accurately the culture of feeling, was to Nedergård so attracting about Egypt.

By the western art in its modern form seeking to get beyond imitation, Nedergård is finding an answer in Islamic ornaments. The Islamic ornament is a visual system rejecting imitation of the outside world, and thus does not seek to recreate the illusion of reality. Symmetry in the geometric ornament of Islam is rather a sensuous joy of being in a world at once confined and infinite, consequently making us dizzy thinking of it. The cultural symbols of Islam work with the idea of life as infinitely rich, and of beauty as not transcending the target of one's living. Nedergård reinterpreted the purposes of the ornament in his images, as a fusion of the western and eastern art systems and aesthetic traditions. As he explained it himself, it was exactly an input to the postmodern painting: "Ornamentation goes in hand with our time, with the modernism – now reappeared as postmodernism. This is the thing, which has inspired me, and which has been my luck – when it comes to timing – that I have had this feeling, and that I came here 7 years ago. I can feel, that there suddenly is response to the things I am working on now".

The exhibition is a presentation of works by Niels Nedergård created during his stay in Cairo, and will at the same time be the starting point of a major undertaking – an extensive book publication about the years in Cairo with paintings, photographs and texts.

Thanks to Inge Breitenstein, Viera Collaro, Henrik Jensen, Kirsten Justesen & Torben Madsen.

Niels Nedergaard is quoted from an interview given to DR in March 1986.

**Niels Nedergaard** (1944-1987) studied at The Jutland Art Academy and the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in the years 1766-75. He joined the artist group "Ny Abstraktion" in 1977. From 1979 until a year before his death he lived in Cairo. Selected exhibitions: Lyset, Nikolaj kirke, Copenhagen. 1978. Fysisk poesi, Kunstforeningen, Copenhagen. 1979. 1000 farver, Galleri 38, Copenhagen. a.o. 1976-77 (with Viera Collaro). Malerier, Cairo 1981-82. Glyptoteket 1982. Trapholt 1983 (with Viera Collaro, Finn Mickelborg). Kunstnere for fred, Charlottenborg, Copenhagen. 1983.