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JAKOB KOLDING *RADICAL WORLD*

Studio Dabbeni presents its first personal exhibition of Danish artist Jakob Kolding, entitled "Radical World" (born in 1971, and raised in Albertslund, a satellite city of Copenhagen, he has been based in Berlin for several years).

In one of his collages, the artist shows a young man skateboarding on a minimalist sculpture by Robert Morris, in order to symbolise the individual who, faced with architectural constrictions, is able to find his own way. "Have there been any attempts, through planning, to either discourage or promote certain patterns of behaviour in your neighbourhood? (Which/How?)", Kolding asks, in the writing in capital letters placed under the image. Similarly, it is no coincidence that "*Dominio dello spazio e resistenza*" (Spatial dominion and resistance) is the phrase that was chosen by the artist for a poster that was conceived of expressly for this exhibition, that the viewer is free to take home.

Jakob Kolding understands, and continues to uphold, that the subject can never be disengaged from the context, and that the many factors that have determined and characterised its identity must be examined in: history, urban planning, phenomena of youth-culture, groups with a specific identity and art. Kolding's work elaborates on the connection between social behaviour and context: the works deal with different perceptions of space—but never as an isolated, static and simply physical space—rather, it is always seen as part of a social, economic, political and psychological context.

The artist includes references to both Modernist art and architecture in his works. Always deeply interested in modernist utopian ideas, he emphasises their formal similarities, ideally overlapping modernist architecture of the 1960s with the work of some of the artists that were active in the same period.

"I have a love/hate relationship with regard to Modernism", he says. He goes on to explain that he loves minimalist art, but at the same time finds the closed nature of some of the works problematic; likewise, he loves modernist architecture, the shapes, the forms and the ideas, but has difficulty in accepting some of the realised projects, seeing them as too static and too inflexible.

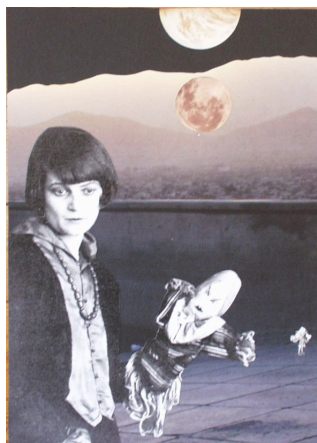
He has chosen collage as his main medium because he is struck by how everything and anything can potentially be included within it, and how every single cut-out opens up the work, allowing referencing to something outside of it. This adds meaning to the work and re-opens up the image to further and endless additional information, in opposition to the idea of an independent artwork.

The words "Radical World" emerge from a collage showing a male

figure in a dark suit with a cane. His face is like a sun with some rays branching outward; in the centre the word "radical" appears and the same word is repeated in overlapping cut-outs placed within the same "face". In another work in the exhibition, a male figure, also dressed in formal attire, whose face is not shown (it has been cut out) rises out of a landscape that is predominantly yellow in colour. It's a vaguely romantic urban landscape, in the distance the vertical arm of a crane, underneath which an upside down cut-out figurine of another person can be seen. Oppositions, upside down arrangements, order and disorder, and real and unreal are recurring elements in these new works. The sentence "This is the modern world", taken from an album by The Jam of the same name, is mirrored along the bottom of this Hitchcockian image. Appearing in the background, but sometimes becoming a central element of the works, there are skyscrapers, the skyline of a modern city that is explored by the artist in all its complex social problems. It's an ambivalent world, with undefined social, physical and psychological spaces, with order and disorder. And yet, it is a declaration of love, on the artist's part, for the urban environment as the place where all of this melts together.

An intense portrait of a woman, Emmy Hennings, an exponent of the Dada movement (and co-founder of Cabaret Voltaire together with her husband Hugo Ball), who holds a Cabaret Voltaire rag doll in her hand, is the subject of a collage in which the artist sheds light on the contrast between the rigid architectonic space in which the subject is standing, and the fluctuating, abstract, lunar landscape in the background (Kolding's intent is to emphasise the relationship between something that is organised and something that is not organised, and their reciprocal influence). "I thought of Emmy Henning (...) because DADA was on the one hand firmly rooted in modernism and at the same time very much a reaction against the logic, order and standardisation that they saw as part of it". This work is a good example of what seems more and more evident in Kolding's work. "The works are not only about urban space. In these newer works it's also increasingly about mental space as a way of contemplating both real and imagined spaces".

These "stories", winding through Studio Dabbeni's exhibition spaces, burdened with the weight of the pressing questions posed by the artist, allow viewers to experience a truly thought provoking experience. (Valentina Bucco)



OPENING: THURSDAY OCTOBER 22 - 18.00
OCTOBER 22 - DECEMBER 5 2009

OPENING HOURS: TUESDAY - FRIDAY
09.30 - 12.00 14.30 - 18.30
SATURDAY
09.30 - 12.00 14.30 - 17.00
SUNDAY / MONDAY CLOSED