

# OVERGADEN.

**Press release  
June 2010**

**Denmark 2010  
Instructions to the Nation of 'the Happiest People in the World'**

**Exhibition period: 26 June 2010 - 15 August 2010  
Preview: Friday 25 June 2010, 5-8 pm**

In June, Overgaden will be opening this year's major group exhibition *Denmark 2010 – Instructions to the Nation of 'the Happiest People in the World'*, which will focus on the dark side of Denmark today.



In Denmark, we have long boasted of our democratic and tolerant welfare state. But there is an immense gap between the image that we foster and present of Denmark and the reality, now characterised by such phenomena as rising social and economic inequality.

"Our self-image is cracking, and we can no longer vouch for it; values are shifting, society is becoming thoroughly regulated and inroads are being made in our personal freedom," say Kathrine Bolt Rasmussen and Katarina Stenbeck, the curators behind the exhibition.

*Denmark 2010 – Instructions to the Nation of 'the Happiest People in the World'* focuses on the sharp disparity that exists between the glossy ideal that dominates the Danish self-image and the less flattering picture that really represents the Kingdom of Denmark.

How can the results of international surveys, which consistently rate the Danes as one of the world's happiest peoples, be reconciled with the constant deterioration of welfare, the curtailment of civil rights, the restrictions on action in public spaces, the criminalisation of protest, the stigmatisation of foreigners and the direct exclusion of population groups? Why is everything that lies outside an ever-narrower definition of the normal regarded with suspicion?

Through works by both Danish and foreign artists, the exhibition presents a critical portrait of the state of affairs in Denmark in the year 2010, and examines the motives behind the widespread delusions about Denmark.

Kristina Ask and Tesnim Sayar unite Islam with the cultural phenomenon of Punk through rebellious and spectacular clothing that still meets the requirements of the Koran towards modest clothing. They thereby create a counterbalance to the often generalised and biased impression that people have about Muslims. With the project *Free Coffee*, the French/Swedish artist Joachim Hamou creates an artistic platform for an encounter between the

general public and a volunteer group of asylum-seekers: from a small booth in front of Overgaden, the asylum-seekers serve coffee to visitors and passers-by.

But broader and more general concepts are also placed in perspective. With the video installation *What is Democracy?* the Austrian artist Oliver Ressler questions the meaning of democracy. Through interviews with activists and political analysts around the world, including Denmark, Ressler focuses on the ubiquitous term 'democracy', which now seems to have lost its original meaning.

**Participating artists:** Kristina Ask & Tesnim Sayar (DK/TR), A.W. (DK), Jes Brinch (DK), Nermin Durakovic (BA), Christian Yde Frostholt (DK), Gåafstand (Pia Röncke & Nis Rømer (DK)), Joachim Hamou (FR/SE), Julie Edel Hardenberg (DK/GL), Maryam Jafri (PK), Carsten Juhl & Ulla Hvejsel (DK), Elsebeth Jørgensen (DK), Ask Katzeff/Jeppe Wedel-Brandt (DK), Pablo Llambias (DK), Jørgen Michaelsen (DK), Ellen Nyman (DK), Olof Olsson (SE), Karen Mette Fog Pedersen/Marie Bruun Yde (DK), Share Your Country (Kevin Lytsen & Jonas Smedegaard Buus (DK)), Oliver Ressler (AT), Åsa Sonjasdotter (SE), Johan Tirén (SE), Lars von Trier (DK), Joen P. Vedel & Thomas Bo Østergaard (DK).

The exhibition is curated by Kathrine Bolt Rasmussen and Katarina Stenbeck.

The pictures above show Julie Edel Hardenberg, *Det velsignede land* (The Blessed Country) (2010), Kristina Ask & Tesnim Sayar, *Taqwacore* (2010), Share Your Country (Kevin Lytsen & Jonas Smedegaard Buus), 2009

*The exhibition is supported by: L.F. Foght's Foundation, the Martha & Paul Kern-Jespersen Foundation, the City of Copenhagen's Council for the Visual Arts, Merrild, Napa Norden, Sing Tehus, the Danish Arts Council's Committee for International Visual Art, and the Austrian Embassy*

**11.00 am on Friday 25 June 2010**, Overgaden invites the press and other interested persons to view the exhibition in the company of the artists and curators.

**Contact:** For further information, please contact Naja Bak Rantorp, press officer, at: nr@overgaden.org, or call +45 3257 7273. **High-resolution press pictures** can be downloaded from our website: www.overgaden.org under 'Press' and 'Upcoming'.

**Overgaden** is Copenhagen's innovative exhibition venue for Danish and international contemporary art. With varying exhibitions and discursive events such as artist talks, lectures, performances and film screenings, Overgaden provides a platform for the latest developments on the art scene, and a forum for discussion of the many forms of expression of contemporary art.

*Overgaden is supported by the Danish Arts Council's Committee for Visual Art*

## **Overgaden.**

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Tirsdag-søndag 13-17, torsdag 13-20. Fri entré