LOUISIANA REVY

10. ÅRGANG · NR. 3 · JANUAR 1970

TABERNAKEL

Beuys · Dibbets · Gernes · Kirkeby · Køpcke · Long · Louis-Jensen · Nørgård · Panamarenko

UDGIVET AF LOUISIANA · HUMLEBÆK

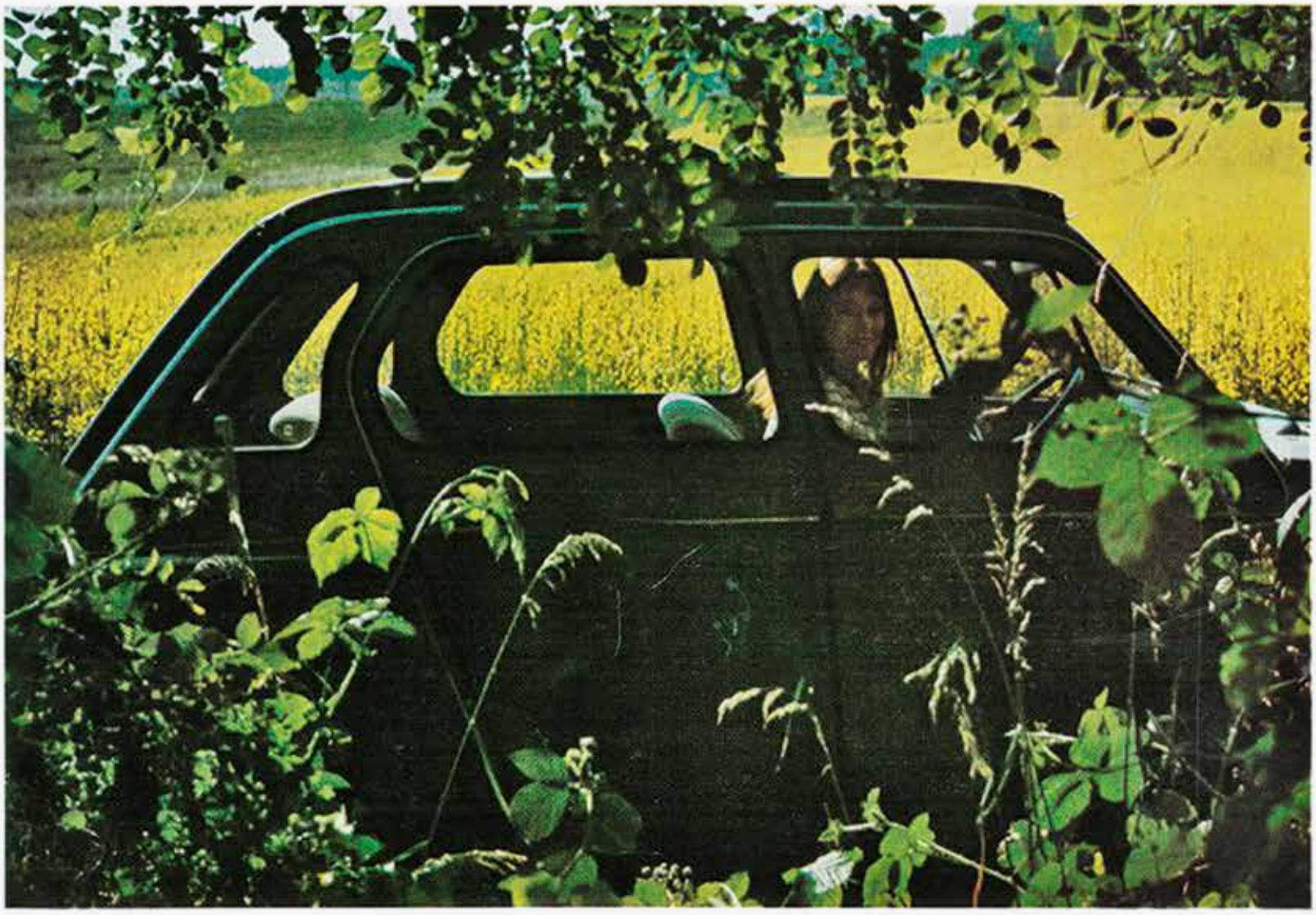


fig. 1

Knud W. Jensen's Louisiana Shock Tabernakel as the Exhibition That Led Gernes and the Museum to a Crossroads

By Anders Kold

fig. 1 Cover of *Louisiana Revy*, Vol. 10, No. 3, January 1970, published for the *Tabernakel*-exhibition

Even today, factory-fresh Citröen cars exhibited in Louisiana's park, complete with professional salespeople, would probably cause some head-scratching among the museum's visitors and clash with the institution's self-image. Yet that is what Poul Gernes wanted to show in 1970, when he was asked to contribute to the museum's big, international *Tabernakel* exhibition. Inside the museum, he wanted machines for coffee, soda and soft-serve ice cream, B&O stereos for sale and a bowling alley. Add to that, an artist-run boat shop and a museum-organized evening school teaching classes in catamaran-building. Tangible aspects of the rapidly expanding Danish welfare state and good Danish design – in the artist's own words, "sponsor art" – but also, of course, an obvious provocation of the museum and its ever lovely location. Gernes had been asked to exhibit with three of his close Danish colleagues – Peter Louis-Jensen, Bjørn Nørgaard and Per Kirkeby – alongside a number of international artists, with the German artist Joseph Beuys as the main attraction. What all four Danish contributors had in common was that they defied the modernist artwork categories, presenting pieces that the museum's founder, Knud W. Jensen, did not consider to be actual works of art.

The first sign that something radically different was going on was the cover of the *Louisiana Revy*, January 1970, with lifestyle ads for Citröen heralding a new mixture of life and art. That the museum saw trouble ahead is evident in the foreword's prediction that the exhibition "will give rise to vigorous discussion and perhaps trigger attacks on Louisiana."[1] Discussion and attacks famously followed Nørgaard's horse slaughter, which kicked up a veritable media frenzy. What the museum did not expect, however, was that the artists themselves would end up attacking the museum and walking out, only a few weeks after the opening, shutting down their contributions to the exhibition. The scandal-embroiled *Tabernakel* exhibition throws a dramatic light on Gernes' and the museum's widely different positions. In the following – step by step and in rapid scene changes – I will try to track the artist's and the museum's paths up to the point where the exhibition became a crossroads for both. Gernes, whose practice in 1970 was simply too radical for the museum, was already going somewhere else with his art, to a place where there was no role for the museum in Humlebæk: he wanted to take his art out of the institution. Meanwhile, *Tabernakel* led Knud W. Jensen to the realization that he now had to take the weight of the museum on his own shoulders.

"BROTHER, I AM SEARCHING"

Trained as a lithographer, Gernes made his debut as a non-figurative painter in 1949 at the juried Charlottenborg Autumn Exhibition in Copenhagen. While most people today associate Gernes with painting, one should keep in mind that his many works with circles and stripes are painted in bicycle enamel on masonite – not exactly a classic technique. Gernes had issues with the modernist tradition and self-understanding, especially when it came to painting. Around the time of his debut and in the years that followed, Gernes never got in with any artists' groups, like the Concrete Linien II. Personal differences may be to blame, of course. We do not know. Gernes, basically, did not want to continue building on the avant-garde tradition,

and his outlook was not academic. To him, the modernist idea of purity in painting was not an expression snugly wrapped up in itself and tradition. His art, when it finally broke away, excelled in methods for bypassing the insider game of painting. As Gernes saw it, an artist's work had to be based on a different set of criteria.

In the 1950s, he must have found himself in a permanent state of crisis: an artist with a legendary capacity for work but essentially strapped for subject matter. At any rate, he was searching, which made his meeting with Troels Andersen, a slightly younger art historian, all the more defining. It was to Andersen that Gernes in 1961, at home in his self-built house in Herlev, declared that his art was "sick." Crucial to his healing, and to what would become a life-long bond between them, was the founding of Den Eksperimenterende Kunstskole (The Experimental Art School), known as Eks-skolen, where their visions of art's social responsibility could be unfolded.[2] There, Gernes met Kirkeby, Nørgaard and Louis-Jensen, the three artists with whom he would be exhibiting at Louisiana almost a decade later. The school was a studio cooperative and learning community with no connection to the academic tradition of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts and with Gernes in charge of the course "Material Experimentation." In the first years of Eks-skolen, instructors and students "accelerated" each other, to use Gernes' term, to a degree that they actually exceeded their individual abilities: collaborative paintings, happenings, materials exercises, exhibitions. Never alone, always together. Out of this, something groundbreaking originated that would later have an impact on the conflict at the *Tabernakel* exhibition.

FROM A BREEZE TO A STORM

In order to retrospectively understand the resistance to Knud W. Jensen's Louisiana and the shit storm that the exhibition unleashed on the museum, we need to go back further, long before *Tabernakel*, to a shock that would be crucial to the museum. It was administered in 1959, when Knud W. Jensen, Louisiana's founder, visited the big *Documenta* exhibition in Kassel and realized the steep challenges his one-year-old museum in Humlebæk was facing. While the museum's buildings, and its programming of concerts, poetry readings and debates, in many ways pointed to the future, the museum's collection at the time exclusively consisted of works of early Danish modernism. His encounter with international contemporary art at *Documenta* led to the stinging realization that the collection was hopelessly behind the times and that the national anchoring hardly jibed with the post-war spirit of modernization. Knud W. Jensen called it his "Documenta shock."[3] This ambition to make up for lost time and bring Louisiana up to speed as a centre of international contemporary art, not least in terms of its own self-image, consumed the museum during the 1960s. The story of *Tabernakel*, which I will here call Knud W. Jensen's *second* shock – his "Louisiana shock" – also includes the fact that it revealed new, far more fundamental fault lines between artists and the institution.

Regarding the affair of Nørgaard's horse slaughter, Knud W. Jensen, at a safe historical remove, wrote: "Such a storm of protests against the artist and Louisiana arose that the affair of the dove in its day was like a mild breeze in comparison."[4] Knud W. Jensen is referring to the institution's first encounter with a negative audience response. In 1961, the exhibition *Movement in Art* opened in Louisiana's park, featuring the Swiss artist Jean Tinguely's self-destructing *Sketch of the End of the World,* a metres-high pile of scrap and moving components effecting its own wreckage amidst fireworks. The work was a magnificent image of war and destruction – or, in the white dove in a basket atop the sculpture – the possibility of rebirth and peace. The dove failed to be released in time, however, and Tinguely inadvertently caused its demise. Looking at the pictures of Knud W. Jensen beaming in front of the rope cordoning off the audience, we sense that it was moments like these – spectacular and existentially intense – that confirmed to him the necessity of presenting art of the moment. What is also striking is how the event in all respects appears to be cordoned off: artwork and viewers are carefully separated. In his memoirs, *Mit Louisiana-liv* (My Louisiana Life), Knud W. Jensen writes that the event should be considered "art, not reality."[5] Why? Because it took place at a museum.

Even so, in the decade between Tinguely's work, which the press in 1961 made into a story of animal abuse, and the second case of animal abuse, Nørgaard's horse slaughter in 1970, it became increasingly difficult to distinguish all that clearly between art and reality – and, in turn, frame art clearly. In the 1960s, when avant-garde art began to be manifested as what were called "situations," an important new departure was the attempt to erase the cordoning off of the artwork, its autonomy. This aesthetic premise also brings the roles of the museum and the artist into play: Where does the work stop, where does the framework of the institution take over, and which role is intended for the viewer: spectator or participant? The museum's visitors and management may well have asked themselves such questions as they proceeded down the North Wing at the *Tabernakel* exhibition and came to the four Danish artists' custom-made projects.[6]

SUNDRY EXPLORATIONS

Gernes experienced nothing short of a boom during the Eks-skolen years, generated not least by the collective he was now part of. From 1962, he was an uber-materialist pushing Danish printmaking beyond its familiar horizon, making etchings by methodically punching holes in the plate with a hammer and compelling a new pictoriality that also allows an equally valid print to be pulled from the opposite side of the same plate. That is transgressive materiality for you. The entire device clearly illustrates the nature of the new image: economical in form, effectively communicative, devoid of mysticism or hierarchies of high and low materials. Out of this, in part, a new and socially oriented view of art emerges. In direct extension of the school's collaborative work processes, Gernes' art also expresses an acceptance of accident and anonymity as important aspects of a new aesthetics. In 1967, he made a "self-portrait" in the form of a plaster cast of his rear end, fully demonstrating, you might say, that also the artist myth needs to be dethroned in favour of real life. "Mooning" the world is another way to profane the idea of modernist white as being purer or more moral at its core.

As far back as we can trace Gernes' statements about his art, he acknowledged that he was searching[7] but also productively obsessed with the idea of not producing art about, or for, himself or for a narrow cultural bourgeoisie. It is worth bearing in mind on one's way to Humlebæk that

fig. 2 The audience and Knud W. Jensen at the opening of *Movement in Art*, 1961

fig. 3 Untitled ("Ass"), 1967
Plaster and cardboard,
57 × 47 × 24 cm

fig. 4 Untitled ("I ME"), 1966-67
Linocut on paper, 2 parts,
each 27 × 21 cm

fig. 5 Stills from *Poul's Paper Performance*, 1967, duration: 2:10 min.

fig. 2

fig. 3

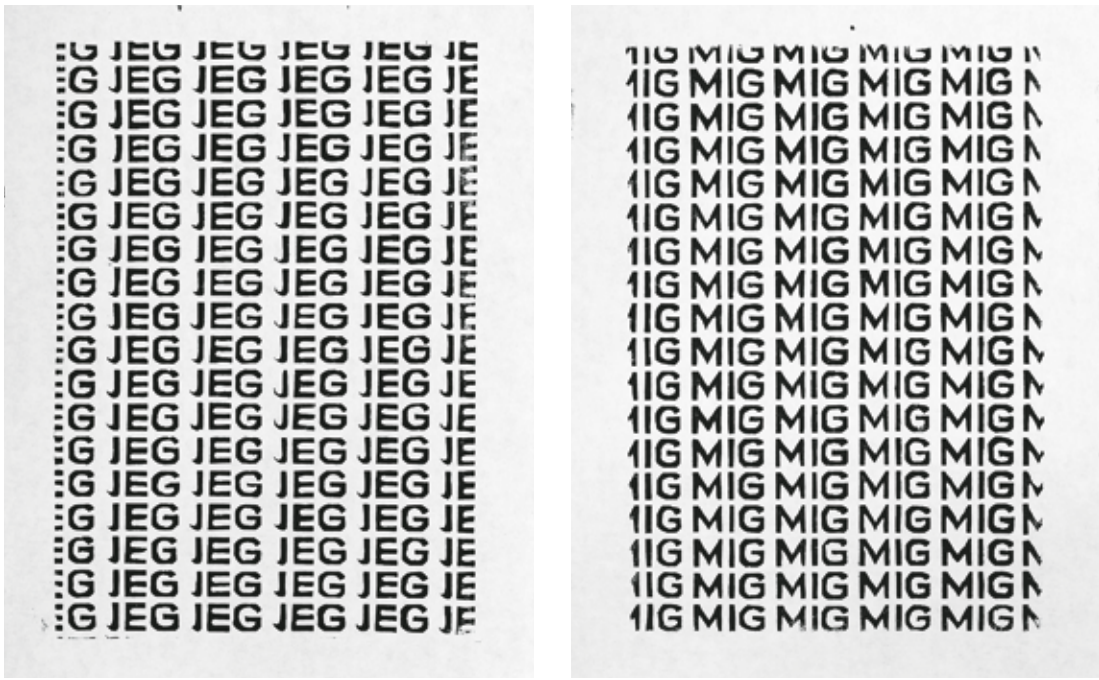


fig. 4

fig. 5

Gernes throughout his life, not without some agony, tried to free art from the private realm – exactly like the hairs we today see stuck in the cast of his rear end: ouch! This inscrutable and deeply funny work productively adds to the portrait of the 1960s by giving us a sense of how, in the Eks-skolen circle, the personal equalled "the impure." Material surfaces, and the idea that everything has a front and a back, are not all that was systematically upended and transformed within the community of the school. The concept of the artist's own figure was also redefined. By being present in various ways as part of their works at *Tabernakel*, the Eks-skolen artists were, by extension, manifesting a desire to reach out and not be cordoned in by the usual authority of the artwork.

SELF-EXPLORATIONS

In 1965-67, just when Gernes' large Systemic series of masonite paintings with stripes, checks and circles were getting off the ground and his pieces were starting to take up substantial space, he effectively turned himself inside out in a small group of works. These works should not be viewed in opposition to the stream of "masonites." On the contrary, they embody ideas that supported and accelerated the radicalness of his contributions to Louisiana a few years later. In three pieces made over a couple of years, Gernes went through a remarkable process of disappearing and reappearing reminiscent of self-explorations or mirror exercises of sorts for artists – as in Freud's "fort-da" exercise,[8] where the child learns to understand itself as an individual separate from both the mirror image and the mother (read: modernism).

Poul's Paper Performance from 1967 is the best known of these pieces. Working from a scripted dramaturgy, Gernes wraps himself in paper from a big roll of brown wrapping paper until he is completely covered, then cuts himself loose with a knife and faces the audience once again.[9] The artist disappears, is gone and returns. This consciousness exercise is also seen in an almost psychedelic series of 16 linocuts from 1966, *Self Portrait (1-16)*,[10] showing the artist gradually growing in size, as we zoom into his eye and emerge out into a greater sphere, where his laughing face with his signature beard finally reappears (see p. 18-21). The last example of Gernes' self-exploration consists of two linocuts, also from 1966. In one, the word "JEG" (I) is repeated all over the sheet, while the other correspondingly repeats the word "MIG" (ME).[11] Two sides of the same coin, but behind the ironic style probably also another note to himself, and the world, that art that narcissistically mirrors only the artist is a cliché. That claim could certainly not be levelled at his "sponsor art" at *Tabernakel*.

It is generally agreed that the time around 1967 marks the end of the intense evolution undergone by Eks-skolen. It was also around this time that painting, as Gernes saw it, stopped generating new results and recognitions.[12] Systems and materials, structures and surfaces, had been explored inside and out. Perhaps the above self-scrutiny provided a sense that a new chapter was beginning.

WANT TO JOIN IN?

1967 was also the year that Gernes started the preliminary stages of his vast decoration of Herlev Hospital. As chairman, he contributed to the anniversary exhibition of Foreningen Ung

Dansk Kunst (The Association of Young Danish Art) at Louisiana. From this point on, his practice changes: works on the wall are, apart from Herlev Hospital, largely replaced by "monuments"[13] – open, that is, anti-authoritarian, models of renewed community. While they may be characterized by familiar historical forms – tower, ship, flag, maypole, bath, pyramid – they are all without exception drained of hierarchal functionality: no kings or captains, no nations, bath attendants or pharaohs! Clearly, Gernes' confrontational attitude to the institution of Louisiana was shaped by a greater social outlook. The change in his art lies less in ramping down the Systemic than in connecting it to societal architecture.

Festival 200 was an international artists' meet at Copenhagen's Charlottenborg in June 1969 and a work-in-progress exhibition that did not focus on a traditional presentation of artworks. Eks-skolen was involved, and Gernes' contributions included a unisex bath and sauna free to use by participating artists and visitors to the show. The spectator was confronted with a sculptural environment, in which the function of the bath was also the content of the work.[14] Of particular interest in relation to Gernes' "sponsor art" at Louisiana six months later was the fact that the plumbing, towels and sauna were provided by the companies Moderne Bad, Thor Vask and Tylö. Apart from the woodwork and a couple of hand-written signs, the work was devoid of any artistic signature. Gernes had left the traditional sphere of the artwork and situated himself in a distinctly social space. Standing there in the shower, was he an artist or a visitor? The action had become the work and, typically of Gernes, the action was an everyday one.

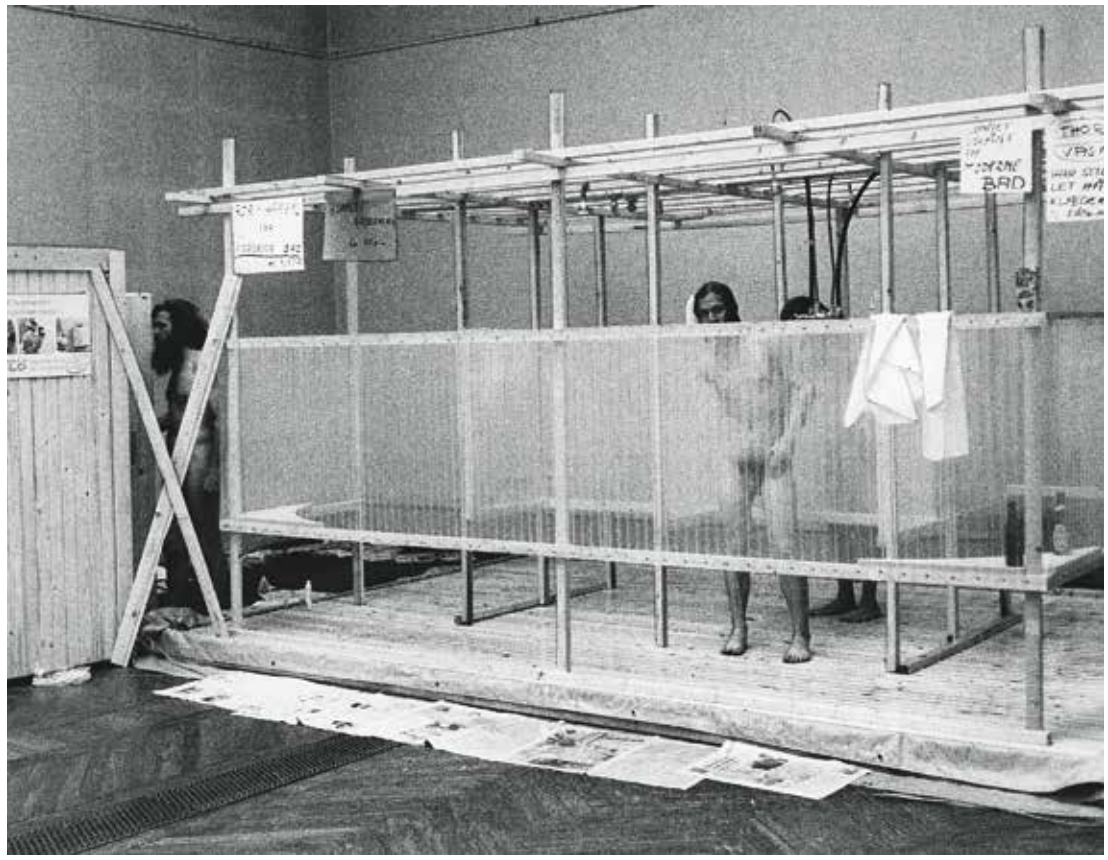
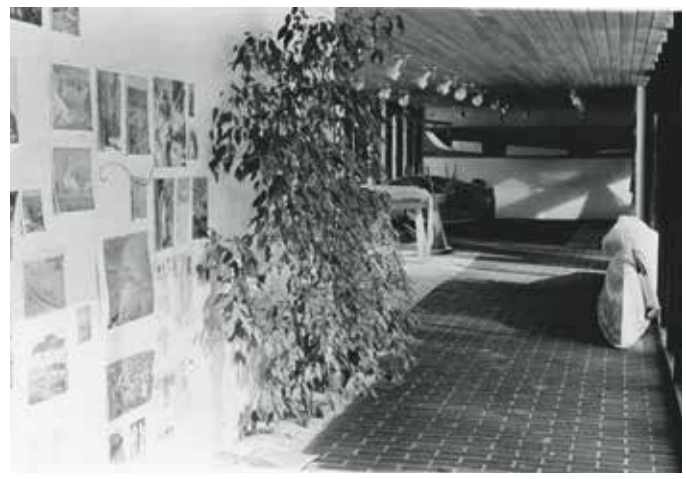
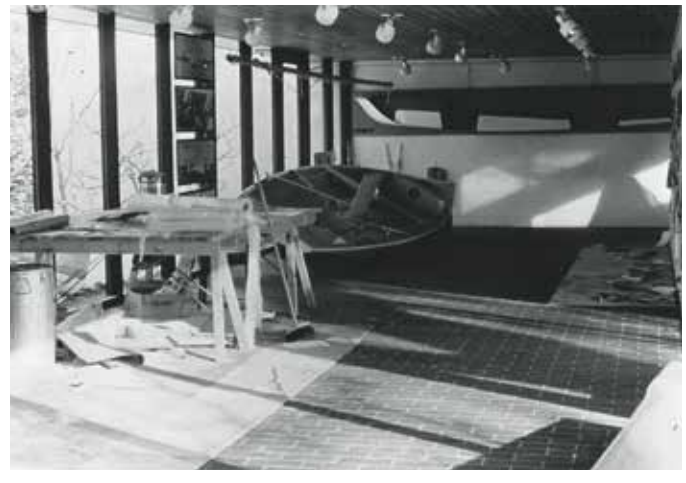


fig. 6

fig. 7





FREEDOM FROM OBJECTS

The run-up to *Tabernakel* cannot be satisfactorily uncovered, though enough information has come to light to illuminate the motivation for the project and why it spun out of control for the museum. In March 1969, Louisiana curator Knud Mühlhausen was in Bern to see *When Attitudes Become Form*. The exhibition was curated by Harald Szeemann, director of Kunsthalle Bern, who the year before had led *Documenta 4* in Kassel. The exhibition was made up entirely of new productions and, as a whole, was critical of Pop and Op art's fascination with images. Front and centre were the artist's actions, not the form and representation of the work: the work is a gesture emancipated from the object. In Szeemann's words, this exploded the triangle of studio, gallery and museum. Returning home, Mühlhausen wrote a memo[15] making clear that the museum was facing a new art form, a mirror of the times, that they could not afford to ignore. Mühlhausen notes that it was hard for him to judge the quality of the art, but doing so was "probably also a criterion that belongs to another age."[16]

At the centre of Louisiana's interest was Joseph Beuys, of whom the museum had declined to do an exhibition a few years before.[17] In the meantime, the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam had exhibited the German artist, "and then Knud summoned up courage," as Nørgaard puts it.[18] The museum no doubt thought of it as an opportunity to edge in and reactivate the image of Louisiana as the pioneering home of exhibitions like *Movement in Art* and *American Pop Art.* A new curator, Flemming Koefoed, took over, and the archive shows that the museum was in informal contact with the artist through the collector John Hunov.

fig. 6 Poul Gernes' public bath and sauna, *Festival 200*, Charlottenborg, 1969 (left: the artist)

fig. 7 Installation views of Gernes' contribution for *Tabernakel* exhibition in 1970. Below the artist (right) with Louisiana's curator Flemming Koefoed

fig. 8 Installation view from the *Tabernakel* exhibition in 1970. Per Kirkeby's nomadic tent

fig. 9 Installation view from the *Tabernakel* exhibition in 1970. Bjørn Nørgaard's stable for the horse Røde Fane

fig. 8

fig. 9

Beuys would be interested in exhibiting "together with some 'young' Danish artists he knows well, has worked in some cases with and finds significant, also in an international context(!) – namely, Per Kirkeby, Bjørn Nørgaard, Paul Gernes, Peter Louis Jensen, Arthur Köpcke(?) and the composer Henning Christiansen (for possible performances)."[19] The museum was perfectly aware that this would be one of the "narrow" exhibitions, but for Knud W. Jensen the primary objective was to get the presentation of Beuys in place. In October, a loan was arranged of approximately 200 works from the major German collector Karl Ströher. Prior to this, it had been decided to supplement Beuys with works by the British artist Richard Long, the Dutch artist Jan Dibbets, the Belgian artist Panamarenko and the Danish-German artist Arthur Köpcke, along with the four Danish artists, Nørgaard, Gernes, Kirkeby and Louis-Jensen. The invitation to the Danish artists reads, "It will be a matter of realizing possible projects, where Louisiana in advance will pay an agreed amount to cover the costs of materials, etc. John Hunov has helped us with the preliminary work and has agreed to continue to serve on the working committee for this exhibition."[20]

In 1970, Louisiana and most other museums were not yet familiar with categories of work that, as our man in Bern reported, were beyond aesthetic judgment. In *Tabernakel*, the museum was confronted with the latest art, as well as works and collaborative forms with which they had no particular experience. Moreover, if we imagine Knud W. Jensen discussing the matter with his closest fellow board members and among friends, it is unlikely that any of these mainly literary people would have been able to convey to him what forms such "possible projects" might take. The museum no doubt assumed that the Danish artists would be suitably impressed at the invitation to show alongside Beuys and that they would certainly also want to be associated with the popular museum in Humlebæk. As far as the latter was concerned, history proved the museum decidedly wrong.

OUT INTO THE MUSEUM

In his presentation at *Tabernakel*, Gernes took a big step away from the traditional artwork, exhibiting products obtained directly through loan agreements with prominent manufacturers of vernacular objects: a working soft-serve ice cream machine, a bowling alley, also free to use, a B&O stereo and TV set for sale, Elvstrøm sailing gear and, finally, the latest Citroën models displayed in the museum gardens. The room also held collages of magazine pictures of everyday living and leisure. The fair-like setting furthermore included a working boat shop building a fibreglass sailboat. Classified ads in the papers announced that, for the run of the exhibition, the cars and stereo could be purchased at the museum from professional salespeople. Everything was anonymous and sourced from the real world. The role of the museum in this context was to house the materials and let the effects of a more open situation do their thing. As avant-garde scholar Tania Ørum writes, "Gernes' contribution can be seen as a protest against the art institution's participation in the commercial art circuit instead of providing socially useful activities. Or, it can be seen as an early example of 'interactive' or 'relational' art, incorporating the audience and blurring the boundaries between the museum and the surrounding world. But there is also an air of resignation about it, as if he despaired of art as a possible form of communication."[21] There can hardly be any doubt that Gernes by this device cast the museum's refined, modernist architecture in an unaccustomed and harsh light.[22] Personally, he characterized his contribution as "a form of life."[23]

Gernes' contribution makes it clear that the role of art no longer is to put up weird and wonderful pictures on the museum's walls. Instead, it manifests a new kind of presence, demanding engagement far beyond the passive observer role. That also characterizes the other contributions to *Tabernakel*: Louis-Jensen's section invited visitors to cross a spar bridge, a passage that in whole new ways transported the visitor, and her gaze, out into the spaces of the museum. The contents of an artist-run swap shop on Fredensgade in Copenhagen's Nørrebro neighbourhood were also functionalized by Louis-Jensen at the museum. Nørgaard showed a stable, where a horse named Røde Fane (Red Banner) was originally supposed to have been kept for the run of the exhibition. Kirkeby contributed a nomad tent, where tea was brewed and the artist could otherwise communicate with visitors. Communicating and being social – the artists' actions placing them on the same level as the visitors – was key to all the contributions. These were "situations," where everyone, emancipated from what Szeemann shortly before had described as the traditional triangle of studio, gallery and museum, could give themselves over to the work as an invitation, just as the public bath at Charlottenborg had been.

Real life in this way catching up with art and ceasing to be separate from it prompted the museum to make some adjustments – or infringements, as the artists saw it. As Louis-Jensen put it, the artists had been invited into "a bourgeois haven. The museum had been representing the modern, which is also an obligation, and a request is then made of us to do something about the matter. We agreed to a specific political situation."[24] Everything suggests that Knud W. Jensen did not realize the implications of that premise when he agreed to invite the four young Danes. Like Kirkeby, Gernes also imagined that he would be halfway living in his work, an idea the museum rejected. The museum also stepped in to stop visitors from being exposed to the noxious odours of the powerful solvents used in the fibreglass boat-building and moved the shop to an outdoor location.[25] Finally, Knud W. Jensen did not want the new Citroën models in the gardens next to the Moores and Calders. "It was stupid of them to reject Poul's cars, which were like a kind of contemporary Venus de Milo figures," Nørgaard recalls, describing how the artists "sensed that Knud W. Jensen wasn't really ready to commit to the project."[26] Or, as Kirkeby put it, there had "been a conflict between the type of exhibition we have wanted, where there will be some life all the time, unlike a static exhibition, of which Louisiana has made many." By and large, the artists probably had a point regarding key aspects of their critique, although the archived documents only capture the part of the process involving Nørgaard's work and the artists' eventual walkout from the institution.

OUT OF THE MUSEUM

As the *Tabernakel* crisis neared its peak, the museum's director was in Paris to prepare the next exhibition – of Chagall, no less. It is easy to imagine the artists' outrage. The polemic about the horse slaughter may have led them to a cross-

roads, but internally it was just as much the artists' anger at the museum's handling of the planned works and activities that made them withdraw from the exhibition. While Knud W. Jensen was in Paris, the artists changed an agreement he had made with Nørgaard on 3 February to meet about the specimen jars containing the butchered horse remains upon his return. Owing to the frenzied media coverage of the horse slaughter, which was fuelled in no small part by the artist inviting the Ekstra Bladet tabloid to attend, Nørgaard "due to his uncertainty about the present situation [has] wished to postpone the decision about the exhibition of the specimen jars for 8 days."[27] Nonetheless, the following day, 4 February, three artists showed up at the office, demanding that the jars be put up before the agreed date. The museum's general manager, Kirsten Strømstad, then began a dialogue with her boss in Paris and held a meeting with the artists.[28] Knud W. Jensen would not bow to an ultimatum and otherwise believed it *was* likely that the jars would go up.[29] Accusations flew. At the centre of it all stood the 22-year-old Nørgaard surrounded by his older and perhaps also more confrontational "brothers."[30] As notes from the meeting show, Louis-Jensen in no uncertain terms described the postponement of the decision as "outside the agreement and unacceptable […] Bjørn has been manipulated."[31] Gernes and Louis-Jensen then demanded that the jars be on the shelves by the following Friday. After a 10-minute break, "the three artists return – Bjørn Nørgaard apparently completely brainwashed – and repeat the ultimatum […] Poul Gernes, Bjørn Nørgaard and Peter Louis-Jensen now launch a strong attack on Louisiana for not wanting to identify with the exhibition […] That's why the exhibition is a fiasco and that's why they don't want to activate their departments."[32] Or, as Nørgaard put it on Danmarks Radio, in words typical of the time, "They have missed the *situation*."[33]

Their years at Eks-skolen clearly had also trained them in the art of standing together in opposition. It can be noted that the museum and the artists were no longer on the same side publicly during the media storm, as Knud W. Jensen and Tinguely had been. The truth is that Louisiana was simply unable to absorb the critique of its authority as a museum and make the adjustments that these artworks required. As Nørgaard later put it, society and real life, not objects, were now the work. "The artist subsequently becomes politically, ethically and morally dangerous, and then the reaction sets in, especially if you make it public."[34] Since the museum was unwilling to be strong-armed, Knud W. Jensen released Nørgaard from their agreement. Thus, Knud W. Jensen reasoned, no agreements had been broken and he acknowledged the artists' withdrawal from the exhibition.[35] On 7 February, Louisiana received a long list of grievances and a statement saying that the museum had sided with reaction. One of the grievances was that Louisiana had violated their artistic freedom of expression. It should be mentioned that Jensen, only one week before, in a principled defence of art had made the following statement to the press: "Opposing the exhibition of these specimens would be an infringement on the artistic freedom of speech, of which Louisiana also stands as guarantor."[36] Even so, the artists deftly spun their version of the story in the press. Beyond the response to Nørgaard's horse slaughter, critics fell into two camps. The majority basically did not understand why "this" should take place at Louisiana. The minority, represented by the left-wing paper Information, was chagrined and did not see how Louisiana could fail to see what art was up to. The critic and librarian Jane Pedersen, became a leading voise the year after the exhibition, when she published the first real book about the artist Poul Gernes, *Der er dejligt i Danmark* (It is Beautiful in Denmark).

AFTERMATH

In a summary memo, Flemming Koefoed writes, "We agreed to give the artists a free hand." He goes on, "New and experimental art will always aspire to show art in new contexts […] The yardstick should be whether we find the project to be qualified and relevant in the context in which it is shown."[37] The museum, moreover, did not get the press off its back just because the four artists had walked out. The media game was another new reality for Louisiana. In another memo, headed "A horse pill – new structures in art and exhibitions," which might have been a draft of an essay or op-ed column, Koefoed writes, "Louisiana has not yet responded to last week's smear campaign against the museum and the artist Bjørn Nørgaard, or to the attacks that the four Danish artists' withdrawal from the exhibition Tabernakel has now triggered." Next, concerning the premise of the exhibition, he lucidly writes, "When we made the plans for the exhibition at Louisiana, both sides realized that numerous problems would arise, since an institution with certain established structures was here opening up to people whose declared goal was to break down or radically change those structures […] In prolonged talks with the artists, Louisiana's management tried to make the exhibition continue in its entirety, which, as we know, failed. There are two possible explanations for the artists' headlong break with Louisiana and their release of a bombastic statement to the press containing so many outright untruths and distortions: 1. a hypersensitivity or suspicion worked up over many years of opposition, or 2. a latent desire to bring about a break."[38]

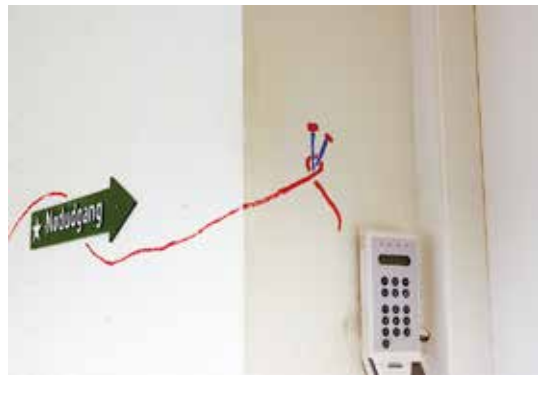
Everything would suggest that Gernes himself was not the least bit shocked at the turn of events. On the contrary, it merely confirmed his opinion about museums. They were no longer the future for him. As a final reflection of *Tabernakel* in the press, Information in July 1970 reported that the Ministry of Culture, while processing Louisiana's request for increased government support for exhibition activities, had received a telegram from the painter Poul Gernes stating that he wanted a possible grant to be on the condition that the exhibitions show the latest and best and most advanced.[39] At this distance, it is not so hard to tell where the lines were drawn – with Gernes going all in – and why things happened to go the way they did. In a Danish context, *Tabernakel* stands alone as the most spectacular and celebrated example of the change in the art world in the late 1960s – and of plain ideologization and institutional critique. The events left the museum with the undeniably slimmest file in its archive and a feeling of fiasco. As Strømstad notes, Beuys and the other three international artists were to all intents and purposes shut out of the conversation and posterity's awareness of the exhibition.[40] In Knud W. Jensen's mind, *Tabernakel* was subsequently never allowed to play much of a role, either. In a long, strategic memo of August 1973, he mentions an area that the museum had been neglecting, "Exhibitions that the artists build on site,"[41] noting examples from Moderna Museet in Stockholm

fig. 10 "Pieces from the Louisiana exhibition", 1970, collage, variable measurements

fig. 11 Walking areas coloured and decorated by Poul and Aase Seidler Gernes, Radarhoved Bornholm, 1993

fig. 10

fig. 11



and the Stedelijk Amsterdam. *Tabernakel* is not mentioned at all.

Today, it might seem as if Knud W. Jensen walked into the crisis a bit somnambulistically and ill prepared. In retrospect, the museum was clearly taking a huge risk with *Tabernakel*. The museum, it must be said, was trying to take a timely sounding of an emerging trend but hit the wave at an odd angle and ended up taking a beating from all sides. Knud W. Jensen, consequently, became more resolved in his view of Louisiana's institutional role in Denmark and where he drew his line. He later wrote, "The sudden turn in cultural life at the end of the '60s, as far as Louisiana and myself are concerned, led to an extended pause in seminars and the museum's social engagement."[42] The politicization, including the marginalization of art, did not sit well with the museum's founder. He was undertaking to withdraw the institution from the political battle zone and consolidate the museum in the long run, financially and in terms of content, as a more established entity. The period of battle in a way ended right when the museum itself momentarily became the battlefield.

If, on the occasion of *Tabernakel*, we picture Knud W. Jensen walking down the museum's halls and running into Poul Gernes building a catamaran, the artist's answer to the question of what he was doing might have ended, "I cannot do it alone – want to join in?"[43] Knud W. Jensen was a gracious person, but this man of culture most definitely did not want to get on board. Gernes was searching, and if he was not occupied with one project, he was restlessly looking for a new one. The last time the two of them bumped into each other was probably at Ung Dansk Kunst's anniversary exhibition at Louisiana in 1967. Three years later Gernes did not have the least desire to reach back – traditional objects and the institution were behind him. In his own way, he, too, was looking for a way out. In 1970, he dramatically confessed, "Need a good suggestion for what I should really spend the rest of my life doing."[44] While Knud W. Jensen turned the museum away from the political arena and in the direction of a more traditional art museum, Gernes after 1970 largely dedicated his art to projects that had a social and edifying function.

Anders Kold (f. 1959), MA in Art History from University of Copenhagen. Head of Acquisitions and Curator at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art since 2001, where he has organized exhibitions with among others Louise Bourgeois, David Hockney, Tal R, Jeff Wall, Jorn and Pollock and the present Poul Gernes exhibition.

1 *Louisiana Revy*, Vol. 10, No. 3, January 1970, p. 3.

2 Troels Andersen, *Ude af øje, Erindringer 1940-1973*. Forlaget Vandkunsten, 2014, p. 119ff.

3 Knud W. Jensen, *Mit Louisiana-liv*. Gyldendal, 1985. Cited from the 1993 edition, p. 64.

4 Ibid., p. 217.

5 Lennart Gottlieb, *Skandaler*. Aarhus Kunstmuseum, 1999, p. 73. As Gottlieb sharply notes, Knud W. Jensen, apparently, was not particularly reflective about why Tinguely's work had received its somewhat ominous title, arguing that Tinguely's political engagement and insistent use of "real life" in his expression did not appeal to Jensen's view of the museum's role.

6 Bjørn Nørgaard never got further than furnishing a stable for the horse Røde Fane in an outbuilding at the museum, and the horse was never kept there. Due to further developments in the case, from the slaughter in a field to the controversial and failed presentation at the museum of the horse's anatomical remains in mason jars, his art work largely existed only in the press.

7 "Broder, jeg er søgende." Interview with Gernes by Jens Jørgen Thorsen, in *Aktuelt*, 15 July 1962.

8 In English: peek-a-boo.

9 In its most wrapped-up moments, the performance bears a striking resemblance to Joseph Beuys's *I Like America and America Likes Me* from 1974, where Beuys, wrapped in felt from head to toe, shields himself from a coyote, which he then spends time with in an art gallery. The sole connection is the contemporary interest in draining art of subjectivity.

10 Published in *Hvedekorn* 2, 1966, and in a very limited edition of prints.

11 Lars Morell, *Det grafiske eksperiment. Poul Gernes' tryk 1943-1996*. Thaning & Appel, 2005, p. 41. Citing conversations with Aase Seidler Gernes, Morell writes that she urged her subject-strapped husband to do something with the only thing he thinks about. Judging from the format of the two sheets, the work might very well have been intended for the journal *Hvedekorn*, which Gernes and Per Kirkeby were picture editors of in this period. As an ur-motif of this interest in the (de-) construction of the ego, which was so typical of the time, Robert Morris's epochal 1962 work *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making* could be mentioned.

12 Jane Pedersen, *Der er dejligt i Danmark*. Borgens Forlag, 1971, p. 64 and 90.

13 Ibid., p. 60. There is no reason to believe that the term "monument" did not originate with Gernes himself.

14 According to Troels Andersen, the toilets installed in the immediate vicinity of the bath were not functional. In terms of reading the work as an action, Tania Ørum, in her 2009 book *De eksperimenterende tressere* and in her contribution to the catalogue for the Gernes exhibition at Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, focused on this interpretation of the work.

15 Memo, dated 23 March 1969, and filed in the archive in the folder marked "TABERNAKEL." Mühlhausen, himself an artist, was employed at the museum from 1959-1969.

16 Ibid.

17 Contacts resulting, in part, from Beuys's presence and contributions to the *Tilstande* happening festival, which took place on 14 October 1966, and was organized by Eks-skolen. Two years before, Beuys had performed another work at Charlottenborg.

18 Conversation with the author, 27 January 2016.

19 Memo by Koefoed, 13 August 1969, "TABERNAKEL" folder. Exactly how this exchange of information took place is unclear. What is certain is that John Hunov historically backed these artists and served both as a member of the editorial staff for *Louisiana Revy*, Vol., No. 3 (catalogue), and as a consultant to the exhibition.

20 Invitation from Koefoed to Gernes of 5 September 1969.

21 Tania Ørum, "Det moralske kompas," in *Louisiana Magasin*, No. 44, May 2016, p. 16.

22 Allan de Waal, "Tabernakel arkitektonisk," in *Information*, 28 January 1970. In the article, de Waal, a critic and architect, praises the Danish artists' striking intervention in the museum. On the effect of Gernes' stands selling industrial design, he writes that they are excellent and implicitly (critically) play on "the worst aspects of the house, the Louisiana *style* that, since Bo and Wohlert in Humlebæk, has been a model for no small number of furniture stores and gastronomic motels."

23 "Kunstkronik," radio broadcast on Danmarks Radio, aired 24 February 1970.

24 Ibid.

25 A rather laconic Gernes objects that "we proposed real solutions to the odour issues of the boat-building. It had all been mentioned from the beginning and could be solved." In "Kunstkronik."

26 Conversation with Nørgaard, January 2016.

27 Note of telephone conversation with Knud W. Jensen, February 1970, in the "TABERNAKEL" folder, Louisiana's archive.

28 Handwritten notes from the meeting. Privately owned. Per Kirkeby was not present at the meeting with Kirsten Strømstad and Flemming Koefoed.

29 Conversation between Knud W. Jensen and Kirsten Strømstad, 6 February 1970.

30 Conversations, 28 May 2015 and 6 January 2016, with Kirsten Strømstad, former general manager of Louisiana, who recalls that the atmosphere was hostile and unpleasant. Nørgaard played no part. Gernes, Louis-Jensen and Hunov were the driving forces.

31 See Note 29.

32 Handwritten notes from the meeting. Privately owned.

33 "Kunstkronik," radio broadcast on Danmarks Radio, aired 24 February 1970.

34 Peter Øvig Knudsen, *Hippie II. Den sidste sommer.* Gyldendal, 2012, p. 57.

35 Note of telephone conversation.

36 "Protester mod slagtning af hest," in *Berlingske*, 1 February 1970.

37 Flemming Koefoed, undated memo. Privately owned.

38 Flemming Koefoed, "En hestekur – nye strukturer i kunsten og udstillingslivet." Privately owned.

39 "Maler ønsker støtte betinget af mere avanceret linje," in *Information*, 10 August 1970.

40 Conversation with Kirsten Strømstad, May 2015.

41 Knud W. Jensen, "Generelle betragtninger. Museet: Tempel eller Forum?" In Louisiana's archive.

42 Ibid., p. 156.

43 Jane Pedersen, p. 129.

44 Ibid., p. 34.