

I Will Utter Dark Sayings Of Old
Interview Astrid la Cour. 2008



How do you relate to the lake as an exhibition space?

MEA: In general, it's considered somewhat of a problem as an exhibition space. Obviously, there is an extensive tradition of classical plastic as water art. But from some place in modernism there is a field where the lines are blurred with so many other decorative placements of visual arts. Today, water art and fountains share a sort of low status as visual art. The direct service of water art of recreation, entertainment and representation is not at all in harmony with the critical self-perception of visual arts. And this way the problem is directly at the centre of a severe schism between visual arts and the public. But personally I'm usually fine with this sort of thing, and I often use

low status elements as a starting point for my work (e.g. Disney magazines, carpets and cardboard boxes). As an exhibition space, I probably think of the lake as closer to the lakes at BonBon-land than the Geffion fountain.

How do you relate to the element of water?

MEA: Well, first of all I can't swim. And secondly, one of my all-time favourite films is "Don't Look Now" by Nicholas Roeg. It's a film about a fatal connection between water, blindness and death. In "Don't Look Now" Nicholas Roeg looks at, among other things, the following issue: "How come the earth is round if a frozen well is flat?" The film finds the answer in a fictitious book called "Beyond the Fragile Geometry of Space".

Actually, I sometimes even get afraid of puddles of water. Not because I think that I'll drown but more because of there discrete nothingness, just as dirty/black/reflecting/casual/amorphic puddles. It reminds me of all the destruction that quietly flows into the world. Water, if it's not something I'm drinking, probably reminds me of how fragile our cultural constructs are.

How do you relate to the historical identity of the place?

MEA: Obviously, there are a number of objective issues in the relationship between place, history and construction that are very culturally conservative but I guess that is very natural at Frederiksberg. I have just chosen to accept the situation as a total package.

If you play with the whole antisocial and romantic setup and look at Møstings House together with the reflection in the lake and maybe especially think of the fact that the house once before was packed up and moved then you remain with an odd ghost-like connection between fiction and construction. Poe's "Fall of The House of Usher" is just around the corner.

Originally, I did not know that it's an artificial lake. My first thought was that it was some sort of village pond that had then been cultivated in the classical romantic garden tradition. A tradition which is in full bloom in the Frederiksberg Park right behind. When I went to look at the lake for the first time in this connection, the lake had just been drained and to my great joy I discovered that the lake was not a lake but an artificial concrete basin. The bottom of the basin is constructed by large concrete plates. All at once, that yanks the discourse out of the nature and out of the romantic garden tradition and into a constructively pragmatic space that for me is a much better starting point from a visual art perspective. When the water is drained, the lake punctures itself as a representative setting. And then I suddenly have the home court advantage because my own work you can, or at least I can, perceive as a long line of punctured spaces and meanings.

With the concrete grid in the basin which almost becomes a sort of topographical drawing the lake possibly becomes a sort of cultural hole or double mirror which might give me the opportunity to together with Nicholas Roeg to make an antisocial inquiry about the relationship between water, blindness and vision.