

MAISTERRAVALBUENA

LAMPPOST

07.09.2022 – 12.11.2022

The gestation of “Lamppost”, the sixth exhibition by the A Kassen group in Maisterravalbuena, followed the announcement that it would be the last to be shown in the gallery, which will be moving to another space once the exhibition closes. The fact that it is the final exhibition to be held at calle Fourquet 6, after ten years of intense activity, led us to reflect on what we do, and more specifically on the role that the physical space may play in shaping it: What are they and what is the reason behind these small spaces on street level that show art for sale?

On closer inspection, the imperfections we find in a gallery space, like the walls filled with holes hidden under blobs of putty or the floors worn down by the coming and going of boxes, are all tell-tale signs that we are, in fact, in a space that is most definitely alive. Exhibitions come and go and leave no time to fix the wear and tear. Unlike a museum, which is reborn in perfection with every new exhibition in a sort of spatial amnesia, a gallery bears the marks of what went before, like scars on a body beaten down by the passing of time. A gallery is something that things happen to, rather than a mere vessel at their service.

It is the journey that the artist embarks on alongside the gallerist that infuses the space with subjectivity. The aspirations, errors and successes of both will be projected on its walls, mirroring both personalities. The exhibition will become a place of confirmation—and also confrontation—of a relationship that, given the very nature of the object in question—the artwork—is necessarily long-standing.

The use of gallery spaces, and therefore its role in art and society, changed radically during the 1950s, when a new generation of artists introduced ordinary objects into their pieces. Art, forgoing languages that would bestow upon it the condition of *Art*, will lose its autonomy to formally depend on what is real. Everyday life was where artists came to fish for new ideas, making galleries the perfect spot to harbour these works, so imbued with reality, that they no longer looked like *Art*. The gallery space went from being a simple support to becoming an integral component that confirms that we are, indeed, looking at a work of art. Artists broadened the definition of art and galleries became their guarantors.

The practice of A Kassen, so eminently procedural, drinks from the collective creativity brought on by the post-war avant-gardes. Their interventions are the fruits of a kind of complicity, of the involvement of different actors who, orchestrated by the artist, transform the process and shape it. Objects are treated as if they were utterances that can be redefined in a new reality, without having to contradict its meaning. In works such as “Window to the World” (Fig.1); “Encirclement” (Fig.2); and “Atlas” (Fig.3), A Kassen

treats the form and function of objects as if they were merely one option out of many possibilities. Its materiality is instead found in a permanent state of change. The image of the object is no longer fixed, and instead is open to different systems of representation (random, serial, analytical, haphazard), transforming what we see, without altering its prior definition as an object. (Fig.4)

.....

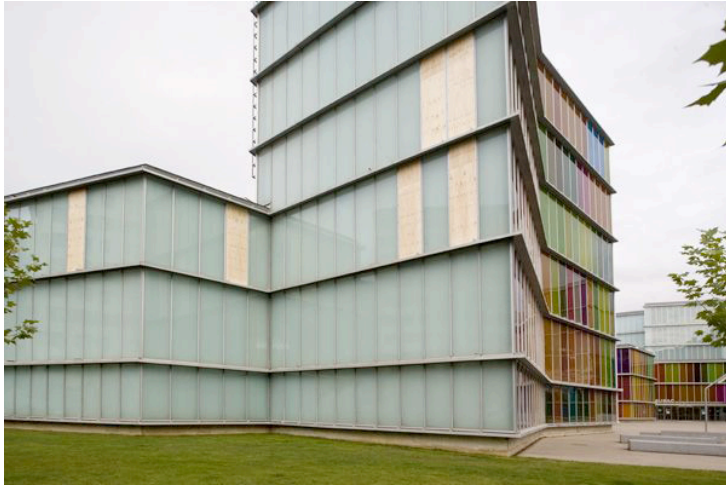
An object created to light up a city's streets bursts into the space surprisingly, starkly revealing its materiality.

“Lamppost” is a blunt, physical intervention of an object that passes right through the gallery, from top to bottom. The work connects the exhibition room, the most public part of the gallery, with the storage room, the most private space. With the slightest gesture, A Kassen subverts the roles and uses of both spaces, transforming them instead into elements that narrate the action. In the storage room, it is the piece that lights up the space, and not the other way around, suggesting to the spectator that what surrounds them can be added to the overall experience of the exhibition.

Coinciding with Apertura, the yearly gallery celebration, “Lamppost” intends to serve as a small tribute to those physical spaces as the symbolic architectures that they are, and will continue to be.

.....

A Kassen was formed in 2004 by four Danish artists (Christian Bretton-Meyer, Morten Steen Hebsgaard, Søren Petersen & Tommy Petersen). Their individual exhibitions include Sorø Kunstmuseum, Denmark and KØS Museum of Art in Public Spaces, Denmark, among other institutions. They have also taken part in exhibitions in Contemporary Copenhagen, Denmark; Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Denmark; Museet for Samtidskunst, Roskilde, Denmark; and Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, Denmark, among others. They have worked in the port of Aarhus, Denmark and in the Kistefos Museet, Norway. The Lund Kontshall, Sweden, has recently commissioned a work from A Kassen for the Gymnasieskolan Spyken.



Window to the World (Fig.1)

Six window panes are taken out of the museum's facade and replaced by plywood boards. The window panes are installed into three automatic sliding doors connected to the center. The sculpture is activated by movement.

MUSAC, León, Spain, 2009



Encirclement (Fig.2)

A photograph is framed using materials from the photograph itself.

Maisterravalbuena Gallery, Madrid, Spain, 2012



Atlas (Fig.3)

A statue of Atlas is cut up into units corresponding with the dimensions of cobblestones.

Fondation Cab, Brussels, Belgium, 2016



The Color of Things (Fig.4)

Objects are photographed before being pulverized. Their dusts are mixed with a binding liquid and applied to the wall as pigments.

Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2018