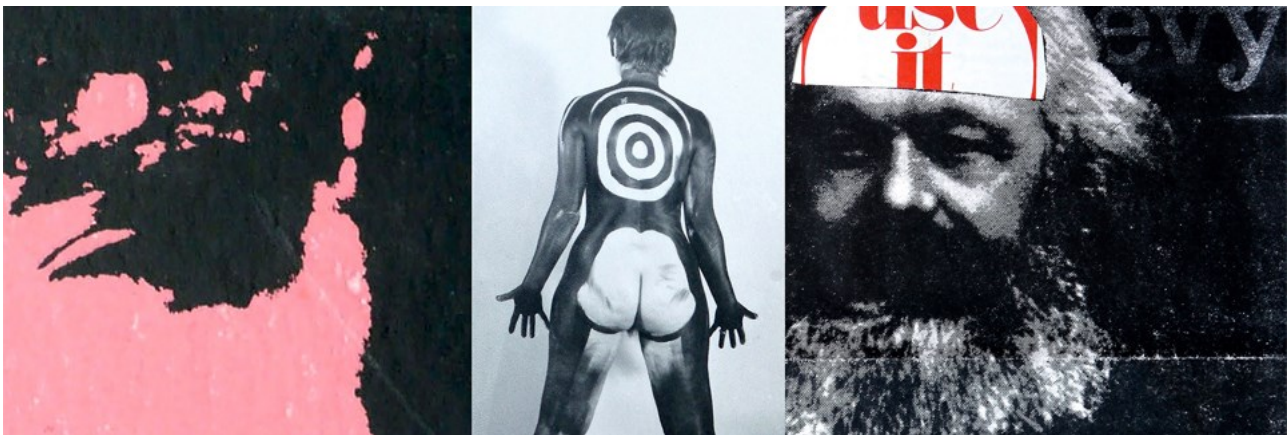


KUNSTHAL CHARLOTTENBORG

Keep Art Flat!

Keep Art Flat! presents no less than 250 works of artist Niels Lomholt's exceptional collection of Mail Art – art sent by mail and often with a political theme. The works were created by artists from all over the world and were exchanged during the period 1975 – 1985.



Political art exchanged by mail

What did the political landscape of the 1970s look like in the eyes of the artist community? From September 15 Kunsthal Charlottenborg presents one possible answer: the exhibition *Keep Art Flat!* brings together nearly 250 works from the Lomholt Mail Art Archive to show how Mail Art reflected and shaped politics of the 1970es.

Mail Art is art produced and shared by mail. Many of the art form's roots lie in the US and Canada, but the term "Mail Art" was coined by a Frenchman, and there were active Mail artists active across the entire globe. The works take shape as correspondences between individuals or as projects that require involvement from several artists. The artistic expression is found both in the individual mailing as well as in the collective project, in the single work or in the infrastructure. All styles and subjects are allowed because the only thing that counts is the exchange.

Challenging the standards for infrastructure, cooperation and community

As art form Mail Art is political in its efforts to build an infrastructure that exists independently of the established art world and it struggles to redefine the meaning of collaboration and community. The most important notion that is renegotiated is democracy. The slogan "The private is political", which was first used in 1970, is essential to Mail Art. Mail Art materialises one particular aspect of 1970s politics, but at the same time it visualises the political climate of the time.

Especially for artists in South America and Eastern Europe Mail Art was a way of sharing their work with the rest of the world, but the "Mail Art Network" could also be a way of exercising pressure on their surroundings as well, when artists in South America or Eastern Europe "disappeared". The American poet Geoffrey Cook, for instance, unleashed a campaign, that resembled Amnesty International's letter campaigns when the Uruguayan artists Clemente Padin and Jorge Caraballo disappeared in 1977.

The sharing of experiences, hopes and fears

South American artists shared their opinion of the military dictatorships in their country, Eastern European artists shared their hopes for international collaboration and artists everywhere shared their dreams and fears. The East-West conflict, the atom bomb, Capitalism and Communism feature thematically in Mail Art of the period, but so too do gender equality, sexual liberation and the environment.

The exhibition is organised in collaboration with Golden Days – Festival about the Seventies, by visual artist Niels Lomholt and art historians Lene Aagard Denhart and Peter van der Meijden.

Press material

For further press material and photo's please visit kunsthalcharlottenborg.dk/presse

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