



la Biennale di Venezia

53. Esposizione  
Internazionale  
d'Arte

Partecipazioni nazionali

## **The Danish and the Nordic Pavilions Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden**

53rd International Art Exhibition  
La Biennale di Venezia

The Danish Arts Council and the Nordic Committee Announce

# **THE COLLECTORS**

**Curated and staged by Elmgreen & Dragset**

Professional preview opening: Thursday, June 4, 2009, at 15:00

Public opening: Sunday, June 7, 2009

The exhibition will remain on view through November 22, 2009

**[www.danish-nordic-pavilions.com](http://www.danish-nordic-pavilions.com)**

For the 53rd International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, the Danish and Nordic Pavilions will host ‘The Collectors’, a single exhibition curated and staged by artist duo Elmgreen & Dragset. With contributions from twenty-four international artists and artist groups, Elmgreen & Dragset will transform the Danish and Nordic Pavilions into domestic environments where the audience is invited as guests. Dining rooms, bedrooms, furniture, fireplaces, a stained glass skylight and the artworks nestled within the households, will reveal the uncanny stories of fictional inhabitants, with their obsessive characters and diverse lifestyles.

The public will be guided on a tour by a real estate agent through a “For Sale” Danish Pavilion, and will be told the story of the family dramas that used to haunt this house. The neighboring Nordic Pavilion has been turned into a flamboyant bachelor’s pad. Here the audience will experience not only the collection of contemporary artworks and design from the mysterious Mr. B., but also his collection of ex-lovers’ used swimwear. As the title ‘The Collectors’ indicates, the exhibition will approach the topic of collecting, and the psychology behind the practice of expressing oneself through physical objects.

More than twenty artists and designers of all ages, ranging from established to emerging ones, will contribute to creating a different kind of exhibition format: One that will appear closer to a film set than a conventional art display. The curators aim to create a feeling of intimacy with their staged exhibition – one that counters the official spectacle and formal nature of the Biennale – and, in close collaboration with the participating artists and designers, they hope to circumvent the usual competitive aspects of the larger art event.

# **THE COLLECTORS**

## **The Artists:**

The artists and designers included in the exhibition are: **Thora Dolven Balke, Massimo Bartolini, Hernan Bas, Guillaume Bijl, Maurizio Cattelan, Elmgreen & Dragset, Pepe Espaliú, Tom of Finland, Simon Fujiwara, Han & Him, Laura Horelli, Martin Jacobson, William E. Jones, Terence Koh, Jani Leinonen, Klara Lidén, Jonathan Monk, Nico Muhly, Norway Says, Henrik Olesen, Nina Saunders, Vibeke Slyngstad, Sturtevant and Wolfgang Tillmans.**

## **The Organisers:**

'The Collectors' is the first-ever collaboration between the Danish and Nordic Pavilions at the Giardini in Venice. It is coordinated as a joint venture between the Danish Arts Council and the Office for Contemporary Art Norway. Elmgreen & Dragset have been appointed curators by the commissioners of the Danish and Nordic Pavilions: the Danish Arts Council's Committee for International Visual Art is composed of five members, and is chaired by Christine Buhl Andersen; and the Nordic Committee consists of representatives from the organisations responsible for the Nordic Pavilion – Marta Kuzma (Director, Office for Contemporary Art Norway, Oslo, Norway), Ann-Sofi Noring (Deputy Director and Chief Curator, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden) and Marketta Seppälä (Director, FRAME Finnish Fund for Art Exchange, Helsinki, Finland). Marta Kuzma is also the Commissioner of the Nordic Pavilion in 2009.

## **The Curators:**

Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset have been collaborating as an artist duo since 1995, and have exhibited in art institutions around the world, including Tate Modern and the Serpentine Gallery in London, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, the Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt am Main, and the Palais de Tokyo and the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, both in Paris.

## **The Publication:**

The exhibition will be accompanied by a publication and a guidebook to the pavilions. The publication will consist of a printed canvas bag containing collectibles selected by the participating artists and invited writers, and will extend the theme of collecting into fields beyond those approached in the exhibition.

## **The Opening:**

A professional preview opening of 'The Collectors' at the Danish and Nordic Pavilions will take place at 15:00 on Thursday, June 4, 2009.

'The Collectors' will open to the public on Sunday, June 7, 2009 at the Giardini, Venice, as part of the 53rd Venice Biennale, and remain on view through November 22, 2009.

Opening times: Tuesday - Friday 10:00 – 18:00.

(The Giardini will also be open to the public on Monday June 8 and Monday November 16).

# THE COLLECTORS

## Press:

For press image material and additional information on the artists and the exhibition, please visit:  
[www.danish-nordic-pavilions.com](http://www.danish-nordic-pavilions.com)

## For National Press:

Denmark: Lene Lund Hansen, The Danish Arts Council, [lenlun@kunst.dk](mailto:lenlun@kunst.dk)  
Norway: Marthe Tveitan, Office for Contemporary Art Norway, [marthe@oca.no](mailto:marthe@oca.no)  
Sweden: Maria Morberg, Moderna Museet, [M.Morberg@modernamuseet.se](mailto:M.Morberg@modernamuseet.se)  
Finland: Marita Muukkonen, FRAME, [Marita.Muukkonen@frame-fund.fi](mailto:Marita.Muukkonen@frame-fund.fi)

## For International Press:

Brian Phillips, Black Frame New York, [bphillips@framenoir.com](mailto:bphillips@framenoir.com)

## Funding institutions:

'The Collectors' is funded by the Danish Arts Council, the Office for Contemporary Art Norway, FRAME Finnish Fund for Art Exchange and Moderna Museet.



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Danish Arts Council



Office for Contemporary Art Norway



Finnish Fund for Art Exchange

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'The Collectors' has received kind additional support from:



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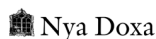
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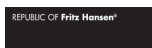
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# THE COLLECTORS

## Colophon

### **'THE COLLECTORS'**

The Danish Pavilion and The Nordic Pavilion  
53rd International Art Exhibition  
La Biennale di Venezia  
June 7 – November 22, 2009

### **Commissioners**

Christine Buhl Andersen (Chairman), Mikael Andersen, Jakob Jakobsen, Eva Koch and Gitte Ørskou, the Danish Arts Council's Committee for International Visual Art  
and

Marta Kuzma, Director of the Office for Contemporary Art Norway, for the Nordic Committee, the additional members of which are Ann-Sofi Noring, Deputy Director and Chief Curator at Moderna Museet, and Marketta Seppälä, Director of FRAME Finnish Fund for Art Exchange

### **Curators**

Michael Elmgreen & Ingar Dragset

### **Responsible for project realisation**

Anette Østerby, Director of the Visual Arts Centre, the Danish Arts Agency  
Office for Contemporary Art Norway

### **Project coordinator**

Rhea Gaardboe Dall

### **Project managers**

Lotte S. Lederballe Pedersen, the Visual Arts Centre, the Danish Arts Agency  
Jørn Mortensen, Office for Contemporary Art Norway

### **Coordinator and technical adviser in Venice**

Troels Bruun, Architect, Emmepiübistudio

### **Press**

Brian Phillips, Black Frame  
Justin Conner, Black Frame

### **Printed matter**

Authors: Annelie Axén, Clémentine Deliss, Anna Echterhölter, Dominic Eichler, Jacob Fabricius, Dorothea von Hantelmann, Sarah Thornton  
Coordinator of production: Henriette Sölter  
Editor: Rebekka Ladewig  
Graphic design: Andreas Koch  
Logo/bag design: Ian Davies  
Photographer: Anders Sune Berg  
Poster design: Fons Schiedon

### **Website**

Stefan Joachim

# THE COLLECTORS

## **Project team**

Project assistance: Chiara Conte, Thilde Nyborg, Laila Kuchinke Palmarini

Project coordination assistance: Milena Monssen

## **Studio Elmgreen & Dragset**

Graphic design: Elmar Vestner

Studio architect: Cheryl Wing-Zi Wong

Studio manager: Sandra Stemmer

Technical assistance: Nils Grarup

## **Emmepiùbistudio**

Accountant: Roberta Facchettin

Architects: Luca Delise, Paul Mazzega, Paula Rendon, Carla Seppe

Coordination: Annapaola Passarini, Riccardo Vecchiarelli

Studio manager: Daniela Murgia

## **Organisers**

'The Collectors' is funded and organised by the Danish Arts Council, Office for Contemporary Art Norway, FRAME Finnish Fund for Art Exchange and Moderna Museet



**KUNSTRÅDET**  
Danish Arts Council



Office for Contemporary Art Norway



Finnish Fund for Art Exchange

**MODERNA MUSEET**

# THE COLLECTORS

## Commissioners' statement

### Denmark and the Nordic Countries: Finland, Norway, Sweden

On the occasion of the 53rd International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, the Nordic and Danish Pavilions have collaborated with a project curated by artist duo Elmgreen & Dragset. The project was initiated by the Office for Contemporary Art Norway, the hosting organisation for the Nordic Pavilion in 2009, and the Danish Arts Council's Committee for International Visual Art, commissioners of their respective pavilions, with the intention to create a 'transnational neighbourhood' within the Giardini, an exhibition context traditionally dedicated to national representation. The appointment of Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset as curators was the logical result of this attempt to construct a common space within the Giardini, because their joint work as artists has been characterised until today by an exploration of both public and private space, and the uses, scenographies and power relations that are at play within them.

Elmgreen & Dragset have responded with an exhibition that, under the title 'The Collectors', offers an allegorical stage set where two interrelated fictional portraits are presented, each in connection to one of the two pavilions. Through this setting, the particular and personal of the individuals portrayed is set in contrast to the wider, open landscape of the Venice Biennale, in an exploration of the increasingly porous realms of the private and the public.

The traditionally sovereign territories of the Danish and Nordic Pavilions are approached by Elmgreen & Dragset by means of a single and unprecedented metaphor – one that proposes both pavilions as inhabitable, as domestic environments both in design and scale. The architecture and interior of each pavilion, radically transformed by the curators in collaboration with the invited artists and designers, turns the buildings themselves into, on the one hand, portraits of their former inhabitants, and, on the other, signifiers for the overall exhibition concept, transgressing the Pavilions as exhibition platforms for national representation and reflecting instead socio-cultural, sexual and spiritual issues from an individual perspective.

At the heart of 'The Collectors', as its title suggests, there is an exploration of collecting, a practice that combines intimacy, publicness, obsession and self-expression. Elaborating upon Walter Benjamin's assertion, from his essay 'Unpacking My Library: A Talk about Collecting', that 'property and possession belong to the tactical sphere', the two buildings and the artworks and objects displayed within them reflect a variety of psychological structures that are based on devotion, desire, ownership, cultural ambition, boredom and vanity. These are topics that Elmgreen & Dragset have explored in their earlier practice, but that in the context of the Venice Biennale, and with the collaboration of the invited artists and designers, are taken to another, unprecedented dimension.

Christine Buhl Andersen and Marta Kuzma

### Commissioners

Christine Buhl Andersen (Chairman), Mikael Andersen, Jakob Jakobsen, Eva Koch and Gitte Ørskou, the Danish Arts Council's Committee for International Visual Art

&

Marta Kuzma, for the Nordic Committee and the Office for Contemporary Art Norway

# THE COLLECTORS

## Organisers

### **The Danish Arts Council**

The Danish Arts Council promotes artistic development in Denmark and Danish art abroad. The Council's two principal tasks are:

- to provide support for artistic endeavours within the fields of literature, the performing arts, the visual arts and music
- to advise public authorities regarding matters within the Council's sphere of activity

The Danish Arts Council has established a committee of experts for each of the four mentioned artistic fields, among these the Danish Arts Council's Committee for International Visual Art, which serves as commissioner for the Danish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. To a large extent, the Council has delegated its authority to award grants and to examine specific matters to these committees of experts. Most of the financial support awarded by the Danish Arts Council and its committees is allocated according to the guidelines laid down in the Literature Act, the Theatre Act, the Visual Arts Act, and the Music Act. The Danish Arts Council may take independent initiative and express itself on matters that fall within its area of competence.

### **The Danish Arts Council's Committee for International Visual Art**

The Danish Arts Council's Committee for International Visual Art has two primary tasks:

- to stimulate and support Danish visual art abroad and International visual art in Denmark through grants
- to define and oversee operational tasks, which are administered and put into action by the Visual Arts Centre of the Danish Arts Agency

The Committee is, among other things, responsible for the Danish representation at the Venice Biennale. Furthermore, it supports Danish artists' participation in international biennials, invites international curators and art professionals on visiting programs, and has initiated the Danish Art Archive [www.kunstdk.dk](http://www.kunstdk.dk), which provides information on Danish art in general.

For the period 2007 – 2011 the members of the Danish Arts Council's Committee for International Visual Art are: Christine Buhl Andersen (Chairman), Mikael Andersen, Jakob Jakobsen, Eva Koch and Gitte Ørskou.



### **Office for Contemporary Art Norway**

Office for Contemporary Art Norway (OCA) is an independent, non-profit foundation created by the Norwegian Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Autumn 2001, as a cultural meeting place for Norwegians and for citizens from throughout the world. OCA's mandate is to increase knowledge of and interest in the contemporary art production from Norway, and strengthen its international position. OCA aims to stimulate and facilitate exchange between Norwegian and international art professionals and institutions, by developing collaborations around contemporary art production between Norway and the international scene through a series of discursive, residency, support, exchange and exhibition programmes focusing on artistic and intellectual currents from Norway and internationally, and cooperating with cultural and academic institutions from around the world.

OCA's Director, Marta Kuzma, serves as a member of the Nordic Committee – together with Ann-Sofi Noring, Deputy Director and Chief Curator at Moderna Museet in Sweden, and Marketta Seppala, Director of FRAME Finnish Fund for Art Exchange in Finland – the organisation that coordinates artistic representation for the Nordic Pavilion for the Venice Biennale. For more information on OCA, please visit [www.oca.no](http://www.oca.no)



# THE COLLECTORS

## **FRAME Finnish Fund for Art Exchange**

FRAME Finnish Fund for Art Exchange provides services and acts as an expert body in international exchanges relating to the visual arts. FRAME, established in 1992, works within the Finnish Fine Arts Academy Foundation and is primarily funded by the Finnish Ministry of Culture. FRAME awards grants to create opportunities for Finnish visual artists to produce, exhibit and present their work abroad. To promote links between Finland and the international contemporary visual art scene, FRAME works in partnership with international artist-in-residence programs. FRAME's curator-in-residence program provides international curators opportunities to research and develop forthcoming exhibitions and publications in Finland. FRAME works both on collaborative projects with Finnish or international partners and acts as an independent producer for contemporary visual art projects, exhibitions and publications. FRAME's Visitors' Program gives professionals visiting Finland an opportunity to get acquainted with the contemporary art scene of the country. FRAME gathers and disseminates information about Finnish contemporary art. FRAME is the publisher of Framework: The Finnish Art Review, a bi-annual magazine dedicated to contemporary art and culture.

[www.frame-fund.fi](http://www.frame-fund.fi)

**FRAME**  
Finnish Fund for Art Exchange

## **Moderna Museet**

Moderna Museet is one of Europe's leading museums of modern and contemporary art, with an internationally prestigious collection of art from the 20th century and onwards. It features several temporary exhibitions each year, and runs an extensive and innovative program for events and educational activities. A number of the exhibitions produced by the Moderna Museet go on tour internationally, most recently Max Ernst - Dream and Revolution, Andy Warhol - Other Voices, Other Rooms and Time & Place: Rio de Janeiro, Milan/Turin, Los Angeles.

Moderna Museet is the official organizer of Sweden's participation in the Venice Biennale, as well as of Sweden's participation in the Sao Paulo biennale and other international events. The responsibility for the Nordic Pavilion at the Venice biennale is shared with the representatives for Finland and Norway.

Moderna Museet was founded in 1958 and is located on the island of Skeppsholmen in central Stockholm. With 500 000 visitors during 2008 it is Sweden's most visited art museum. In autumn 2009, Moderna Museet Malmö, a new venue, will open in the premises of the erstwhile Rooseum, through a unique collaboration between the government, the Scania region and the city of Malmö.

[www.modernamuseet.se](http://www.modernamuseet.se)

**MODERNA MUSEET**



# THE COLLECTORS

## CURATORS' CV

### Elmgreen & Dragset, short biography:

Michael Elmgreen, born in Copenhagen / Ingar Dragset, born in Trondheim  
live and work in London / Berlin

### Solo exhibitions (selected)

- 2009 Trying to Remember What We Once Wanted to Forget, MUSAC, León
- 2008 Inauguration of Memorial to the Homosexual Victims of the Nazi Era, Berlin  
Too Late, Victoria Miro Gallery, London
- 2007 This Is The First Day Of My Life, Malmö Konsthall
- 2006 Disgrace, Emmanuel Perrotin Gallery, Miami
- 2006 The Welfare Show, Serpentine Gallery, London / The Power Plant, Toronto (cat.)
- 2005 Prada Marfa, Art Production Fund / Ballroom Marfa, Marfa, Texas  
End Station, Bohlen Foundation, New York  
The Welfare Show, Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen
- 2004 Blocking the View, Tate Modern, London  
Moving Energies, Museum Folkwang, Essen  
Intervention 37, Sprengel Museum, Hannover
- 2003 Short Cut, Fondazione Trussardi, Milan  
Spaced Out, Portikus, Frankfurt A.M. (cat.)
- 2002 Powerless Structures, Fig. 229, CGAC, Santiago de Compostela  
Museum, Sala Montcada / Fundació La Caixa, Barcelona (cat.)
- 2001 Taking Place, Kunsthalle Zürich, Zürich (cat.)  
Powerless Structures, fig. 111, Portikus, Frankfurt a. M.  
A Room Defined by its Accessibility, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen (cat.)
- 2000 Zwischen anderen Ereignissen, Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig, Leipzig

### Group exhibitions (selected)

- 2009 New Aquisitions, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark
- 2008 Time Crevasse, Yokohama International Triennale of Contemporary Art  
SCAPE, Christchurch Biennale of Art and Public Space, Christchurch  
U-Turn, Quadrennial for Contemporary Art, Copenhagen  
Art on Stage, Theater Basel, Art Basel, Basel
- 2007 2. Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, Moscow  
Skulptur Projekte Münster, Münster
- 2006 Group Therapy, MUSEION, Bolzano  
Fever Variations, Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju  
Into Me / Out of Me, P.S.1, New York, KunstWerke, Berlin  
Why pictures Now, MUMOK, Vienna
- 2005 Universal Experience, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (cat.)  
Monuments for the USA, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts,  
San Francisco (cat.) / White Columns, New York  
Lichtkunst aus Kunstlicht, ZKM, Karlsruhe
- 2004 Artists' Favourites, ICA - Institute for Contemporary Art, London  
Die Zehn Gebote, Deutsches Hygiene-Museum, Dresden (cat.)  
Works and Days, Louisiana Museum for Moderne Kunst, Humlebaek  
Reordering Reality, Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, Ohio
- 2003 Utopia Station, 50th Biennale di Venezia, Venice (cat.)  
Living Inside The Grid, New Museum, New York (cat.)  
nation, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt A.M. (cat.)  
Happiness, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (cat.)  
The Living Museum, Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt A.M. (cat.)
- 2002 25th Sao Paulo Biennial, Sao Paulo (cat.)  
Pause, Gwangju Biennial, Gwangju (cat.)  
Preis der Nationalgalerie für junge Kunst, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (cat.)

# THE COLLECTORS

## Short Biographies of the Artists

Thora Dolven Balke

born in Oslo, Norway in 1982

lives and works in Oslo, Norway

Massimo Bartolini

born in Cecina, Italy in 1962

lives and works in Cecina, Italy

Hernan Bas

born in Miami, Florida, USA in 1978

lives and works in Miami, Florida, USA

Guillaume Bijl

born in Antwerp, Belgium in 1946

lives and works in Antwerp, Belgium

Maurizio Cattelan

born in Padova, Italy in 1960

lives and works in New York, USA

Elmgreen & Dragset

Michael Elmgreen, born in Copenhagen, Denmark

Ingar Dragset, born in Trondheim, Norway

have been collaborating since 1995

live and work in London, United Kingdom, and Berlin, Germany

Pepe Espaliú

born in Córdoba, Spain in 1955

died in Córdoba, Spain in 1993

Tom of Finland

born in Kaarina, Finland in 1920

died in Helsinki, Finland in 1991

Simon Fujiwara

born in London, United Kingdom in 1982

lives and works in Berlin, Germany

Han & Him

born in Penang, Malaysia in 1979

live and work in London, United Kingdom

Laura Horelli

born in Helsinki, Finland in 1976

lives and works in Berlin, Germany

Martin Jacobson

born in Stockholm, Sweden in 1978

lives and works in Malmö, Sweden

# THE COLLECTORS

William E. Jones  
born in Canton, Ohio, USA in 1962  
lives and works in Los Angeles, USA

Terence Koh  
born in Beijing, China in 1980  
lives and works in New York, USA

Jani Leinonen  
born in Hyvinkää, Finland in 1978  
lives and works in Helsinki, Finland

Klara Lidén  
born in Stockholm, Sweden in 1979  
lives and works in Berlin, Germany

Jonathan Monk  
born in Leicester, United Kingdom in 1969  
lives and works in Berlin, Germany

Nico Muhly  
born in Vermont, USA in 1981  
lives and works in New York, USA

Norway Says  
Torbjørn Anderssen is born in Elverum, Norway in 1976  
Andreas Engesvik is born in Svolvær, Norway in 1970  
Espen Voll is born in Trondheim, Norway in 1965  
live and work in Oslo, Norway

Henrik Olesen  
born in Esbjerg, Denmark in 1967  
lives and works in Berlin, Germany

Nina Saunders  
born in Odense, Denmark in 1958  
lives and works in London, United Kingdom

Vibeke Slyngstad  
born in Ålesund, Norway in 1968  
lives and works in Oslo, Norway

Sturtevant  
born in Lakewood, Ohio, USA in 1930  
lives and works in Paris, France

Wolfgang Tillmans  
born in Remscheid, Germany in 1968  
lives and works in Berlin, Germany, and London, United Kingdom

For more information and extended biographies, please visit: [www.danish-nordic-pavilions.com](http://www.danish-nordic-pavilions.com)

# THE COLLECTORS

## Additional support

The Danish and Nordic Pavilions wish to thank the following funding institutions and sponsors for their generous and kind support:

'The Collectors' has received additional support from the **Arts Council Norway** and **Nordic Culture Fund**



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Arts Council Norway



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The artist objects in the publication have received additional support from **Nya Doxa**, **La Salumeria Eustacchio** and **Storebrand**

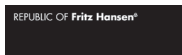


Nya Doxa



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Royal Danish Embassy



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