

ARKEN

PRESS RELEASE

Haus-Rucker-Co: Giant Billiard

Come and play in the Viennese architect/artist group Haus-Rucker-Co's legendary installation *Giant Billiard* that is now on show at ARKEN Museum of Modern Art, south of Copenhagen. The exhibition presents the work for the first time ever in Scandinavia.

A huge, three-metre inflatable ball comes rolling towards you at high speed. What do you do? Do you jump for your life, do you let yourself be run over, or do you pass the ball to someone else while stumbling around on a vast white air mattress? Whatever you choose, it's certainly a unique experience. You are in an art museum with all its usual rules and restrictions, but the work *Giant Billiard* expressly invites you to play – regardless of whether you are an adult or a child.

The games played out in *Giant Billiard* raise questions about how we organise our everyday lives and our society. How do our physical settings affect the way we interact with other people? Curator Jenny Lund highlights why Haus-Rucker-Co's *Giant Billiard* remains relevant today:

'With Giant Billiard, Haus-Rucker-Co explores how play and games can nurture communities and prompt change in everyday life and in society. Back in the late 1960s, the artist collective responded to the growing sense of alienation in consumer society as well as to the rise in air pollution by creating utopian models which offer up new social spaces and new ideas about the future,' says curator Jenny Lund.

'In a time of growing social inequality and isolation, one where communities are threatened by anti-democratic trends, a food crisis and the major climate challenges Haus-Rucker-Co provides architectural visions of togetherness and dialogue,' Lund continues.

Rebellious architects

Giant Billiard was created in 1970 by Haus-Rucker-Co – an exuberant and rebellious collective of architects and artists from Vienna. The founders behind the name were Laurids Ortner, Günter Zamp Kelp and Klaus Pinter. The times called for radical changes, and the three men wanted to challenge traditional understandings of space, break down power hierarchies and create utopian urban spaces full of clean air and a strong sense of community.

The group's projects were imaginative, and Haus-Rucker-Co challenged conventional thinking. They created habitable bubbles which tumbled out the windows of tall buildings

as well as futuristic masks that made the wearer see the world in entirely new colours and shapes. They also invited citizens to build a metropolis out of bread and cake, which everyone could then take part in eating. The city quite literally crumbled as its inhabitants came together in a new community.

In 1972, the artist group Haus-Rucker-Co moved its headquarters from Vienna to Düsseldorf, where the newly trained painter Manfred Ortner joined the collective. A year later, the group gained another member, artist and writer Carroll Michels. Today, all members of Haus-Rucker-Co are active individually.

Giant Billiard was originally shown at the Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts (now mumok) in Vienna in 1970, and later that year at the Museum for Contemporary Crafts in New York. The work was re-created at the mumok in Vienna in 2019 and can now be experienced for the first time ever in Scandinavia at the ARKEN exhibition.

Giant Billiard will be exhibited at ARKEN from 8 October 2022 til 16 April 2023

For more information please contact:

Head of Communication Anne Axholm

T: +45 51 67 02 03

E: anne.axholm@arken.dk

Press co-ordinator Lea Bolvig

T: +45 30 45 67 18

E: lea.bolvig@arken.dk