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Pedagogies of Space: Oskar Hansen and Open Form

11-23 August 2015

Opening: 11 August, 17:30 – 20:00



With an exhibition opening on 11 August, Index launches a six-month project dedicated to the pedagogy of Open Form, created by Oskar Hansen (1922-2005). Hansen was a Polish visionary architect, artist and urban theorist. Informed by theoretical concepts deriving from architecture, Hansen's teaching enriched art education with issues of processuality, interaction, a revision of artist-audience hierarchies and an emphasis on the freeing of individual subjectivity. His work became an important reference point for visual artists who treated their practice as a form of social experimentation.

Formulated in 1959 at the XI. CIAM congress in Otterlo, the theory of Open Form formed a strong conceptual basis for all fields of Hansen's activities. A former assistant of Pierre Jeanneret, a student of Fernand Léger and an active member of Team 10, he called for opening architecture for the activities of its users and turn it into a 'perceptive background' exposing the events of everyday life. Oriented at participation, the Open Form promoted the understanding of architecture as a tool which could be given to the users and easily adapted to their changing needs.

The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation
Kungsbros Strand 19, 112 26 Stockholm, Sweden
T. +46 8 502 198 38

www.indexfoundation.se

Organisationsnummer: 802407-2434

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Focused on the Open Form pedagogy, developed by Hansen at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts between 1953 and 1983, the project at Index investigates the models and tools that Open Form can provide for contemporary spatial practice, and primarily art and architecture education. In a six-month long process, works and projects by Hansen and his students will be exhibited, tested, discussed and developed into contemporary applications.

Starting with a presentation of original materials by the architect and his collaborators, including some of his didactical apparatuses—devices used to teach basic rules of composition and to exercise perception—and film documentation of „open-air exercises“ developed in the 1970s, student groups from the Royal Institute of Art / KKH (MA Art and Architecture, Prof. Peter Lang) and Konstfack (Organizing Discourse, Lecturer Magnus Erisson and CuratorLab, Lecturer Anna Tomaszewska) will investigate their relevance for today and future models of Open Form pedagogy. Hansen's tool as well as proposals resulting from the student's work will be tested, integrated and documented within Index's learning program with children and young people. The project will culminate in an international meeting in November 2015 with experts, practitioners and students to discuss Hansen's approach and present results from workshops.

Opening hours

Wednesday - Friday 12am - 6pm, Saturday - Sunday 12am - 4pm

Monday, Tuesday and Public Holidays (Red days) closed

Social media: @indexstockholm #oskarhansen #pedagogiesofspace

The project is co-curated with Aleksandra Kędziorek.

With kind support by the Polish Institute in Stockholm, Polish Presidency in the Council of Baltic Sea States, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw.

About Index

Index is based in the centre of Stockholm and offers an ambitious program of exhibitions, events and learning activities for a wide range of audiences. The program includes emerging artists with specifically produced new work, alongside presentations by artists from previous generations shown in a new perspective. Larger projects are accompanied by an extensive public program, often produced in collaboration with other organizations in Stockholm and abroad, with talks and film screenings, music, dance and poetry events. Index takes risks and opens up various ways to encounter contemporary culture and debate. Celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2015, Index is today one of the most important and longest-standing spaces for contemporary art in Scandinavia.

Image Credit: Oskar Hansen at the AICA congress in Wroclaw, 1975. Photo: S. Stepniewski, courtesy of Igor Hansen

