

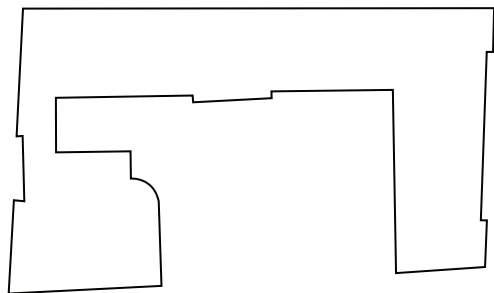
Bobrikova & de Carmen

Dysfunctional
Deconstructions



17 August to 06 September 2020
Rogaland Kunstsenter

Skaus is a hosting and occupying platform initiated by Håvard Sagen, Markus Bråten and Mari Kolbeinson. It is a support structure that instigates encounters between sites, artists, institutions, social infrastructures and the audience. The first season consists of 5 parallel exhibitions at two contrasting sites in Stavanger, Norway. Running from February - September 2020 the project includes contributions from nine invited artists and artist collectives. Skaus embody all previous contributions and represent an ever-changing multi-authored artwork that is not geographically anchored.



Inner structure floor plan

Martinka Bobrikova & Oscar de Carmen

Dysfunctional Deconstructions

Dysfunctional Deconstructions is an installation carried by us, the artist duo Martinka Bobrikova & Oscar de Carmen, as part of Phase 4 of Skaus' exhibition series in Stavanger, Norway. This artistic intervention is taking place at the Rogaland Kunstsenter (RKS), after invitation by Skaus—a nomadic art and exhibition project initiated by Håvard Sagen, Markus Bråten, and Mari Kolbeinson.

Skaus is a hosting and occupying platform that serves as a support structure instigating encounters between sites, artists, institutions, social infrastructures, and the audience, operating as a pilot project and generative space for art mediation. In its first season, the pilot featured five parallel exhibitions at two contrasting sites in the city of Stavanger, TOU and Rogaland Kunstsenter (RKS). Through several project phases, ongoing between February and September 2020, a number of artists and artist collectives were invited to work site-specifically and independently acting on the given structures and artistic conditions that have emerged in both cultural institutions.

For these encounters to happen Skaus built two identical large-scale wooden modules. The first serves as an inner-frame and occupying space within RKS' gallery room. The second inhabited a portion of public space in the outdoor area of TOU. These temporary infrastructures served Skaus as an inhibitor of encounters between the institutions and various social subjects in the city and beyond. For Skaus, the project is a variable and 'elastic' work(s) of art that allows for a juxtaposition of artistic gestures from various authors, leading to an evolving chain of configurations in both spaces as a way to make visible myriad forms and dynamics of interaction throughout time.

When Skaus asked us to participate in the project, we had to ask ourselves: How do we make an exhibition that explores and questions the relationship between artist, institution, work, and the public? We decided to face that challenge by creating a dichotomous artwork-space intervention, in which the gesture of stripping down one of the wooden structures from its surfaces would not make it lose its spatial weight and suddenly turn it into

a portable object. On the contrary, by deconstructing this physical structure -and only leaving the pillars as support- we would be potentially exposing the anachronical nature of a much more expanded and long-lasting gesture. Our aim is a gesture that enables a collective gathering of narratives and perspectives that had already been organically evolving for quite some months before our arrival. We proposed less obvious, unconventional, suggestions as to how Skaus' space performs within an outer layer of institutional presence, only to engage us in broader social and political thought constellations around this convergence. We wanted to explore how the space that Skaus had created within, almost hugged by the exhibition hall, is also tied to a complex institutional framework that served as an umbrella for its birth.

Another potential reading of the room is that this conceptual act of deconstruction aimed at posing a clear aesthetic gesture. The exhibition of the module's skeleton in the room literally undressed of its own ceiling, walls, and floor. This is done using tie-downs and fastening tapes as a physical and symbolic aesthetic reinforcement, aiming to show how these two architectural bodies are tied in space.

We see this as a dysfunctional event through showcasing the module's structural leftovers in conjunction with the permanent walls of the Rogaland Kunstsenter. At the end of our time at Skous, we are delving deeper into reflections on how institutional and cultural frameworks are being transformed. A line of inquiry that has been long-present in conceptual art and the institutional critique movement. We understand this practice as a mode of self-introspection that can help us analyze our own artistic practice in relation to similar collaborative efforts and attempts to alter cultural structures. Furthermore, we would like to emphasize the people's empowerment and governance, based on the values that we believe should serve new ideas on what the Institution should be and stand for on behalf of the public.

We are now reflecting in a broader way about the intricacies of what we called a dysfunctional deconstruction, in which, we believe, most acts of institutional critique are submerged into nowadays. However, we certainly do not consider our work institutional critique, but rather an artistic game; raising playful reflections on a cultural utopia and whether the production of it is, in fact, a realistic impulse to act upon. We need to examine the art world's political and economic structures from that very same curious universe of inquiry.

In short, our goal is to generate a kind of discourse that encompasses critical investigations about cultural legitimization and the 'site' for art. Whether we are chasing, or not, the idea of a new institutionalism, it is still possible to question cultural legitimization by performing dysfunctional (not performing 'normally') processes of cultural resistance. Which we would like to believe may help to create wider avenues for the empowerment of new social subjects and to instigate, or insinuate, a new mode of artistic citizenship.

We then cannot help but ask what this new era of institutional critique holds? How can artistic tactics and strategies achieve social transformation? How far are we from a meaningful and integral change of arts superstructures? Far from an answer, works of art have always found a way to return at a later point in history, each time adopting a different meaning. This meaning has a performative component to it, capable of changing aspects of time and space as potential instruments for creation and consciousness. As Andrea Fraser once said "Now, when we need it most, institutional critique is dead, a victim of its success or failure, swallowed up by the institution it stood against." Luckily, that's yet to be confirmed. In the meantime, we can only try to hold ties to those forms of relentless collective efforts -like the ones performed by Skaus- to help untangle the unresolved art identities that Fraser once referred to.







We warmly thank and acknowledge all of our contributors, collaborators, and the organizations that helped make the installation of this project possible. A special thanks is also owed to: Skaus (Håvard Sagen, Markus Bråten and Mari Kolbeinson), Rogaland Kunstsenter and Karolina Wiewiórska.

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Martinka Bobrikova & Oscar de Carmen have been working together as an artistic duo since 2005. They have participated in several residencies such as SaSa Art Project, Jatiwangi Art Factory, AIR Krems, Sweet Home / Curators Network in Madrid, Seoul Art Space_Geumcheon, KulturKontakt Austria, Nida art Colony or MeetFactory. Their works have been presented in venues and projects such as 5th Odessa Biennale, Fotogalleriet, Saitama Triennial, Akershus Kunstnersenter, Tranzit.sk, 2nd Tbilisi Triennial, Prague Quadrennial, Centre Contemporary Art in Singapore, Museum of Contemporary Art Roskilde, Singuhr- Berlin; Center of Contemporary Art- Tbilisi, Röda Sten.

Since 2012 they run Nomad AiR, a Nomadic artist-in-residence program focuses on the notion of hospitality and the social relations between “host” and “guest” para-siting the infrastructure of other institutions and in 2017 they co-founded the project / residency program Future Utopia Community Key, which is dedicated to the activities in the rural village of Uddebo (SE) and the area. From 2018 they curate an annual gathering in form of a anti-symposium IECES (International Encounters of Community and Environmental Sociology, New forms of contemplation for a new society), that serves as a meeting place for the exchange of experiences of the participants with the local community where the objective is to discuss the future of independent cultural frameworks also as the exploration of knowledge production and non hierarchical structures. In 2019 they became active part of reshape project where they contribute to imagining, testing and creating concrete, realistic and sustainable solutions within the group with the theme: “Transnational / postnational artistic practices: What framework and tools do artists working transnationally need and how to provide them”. Recently they co-founded “The Union”, a new art platform in Oslo, where we focus on facilitating the publics’ interaction with new forms of care, participation, and empowerment through the arts.