

The Story of Public Art – Dancing in the Streets (On Power)

Opening March 22 and 23, 2025

On March 22, MAPS – Museum of Art in Public Spaces opens its international exhibition *The Story of Public Art* with the first act: *Dancing in the Streets (On Power)*. The exhibition explores art in public spaces under the tagline ‘*what artists do in public spaces*,’ presenting over 70 artists who, over six decades, have challenged and expanded our understanding of public art. The opening will take place on March 22 and 23, 2025, at MAPS - Museum of Art in Public Spaces in Køge, as well as at Copenhagen City Hall Square, Nørreport Station, and on the billboards at Fisketorvet in Odense.

MANIFESTATIONS IN PUBLIC SPACES

Dancing in the Streets (On Power) focuses on temporary art forms – performances, happenings, situations, and manifestations. The exhibition traces artistic experiments that emerge in one part of the world and spread elsewhere: from radical interventions in 1960s South America to anti-authoritarian, self-organized projects in 1980s New York – and further to new artistic platforms in West Africa in the 2010s. It is not a single, unified narrative but a multitude of stories that together form a dynamic account of art’s potential in public space.

In short, the exhibition is about art and life and how the two intertwine.

FROM DANCING IN THE STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO TO PERFORMANCES IN MAPS’ FOYER

The Story of Public Art is curated as a dynamic, evolving form that changes character throughout the exhibition period. The exhibition begins with dance in urban spaces – from **Anna Halprin’s** *City Dance* in San Francisco to **Hélio Oiticica’s** iconic capes, *Parangolé*, worn in spontaneous processions through the streets of Rio de Janeiro.

As part of the exhibition, artist and choreographer **Maria Hassabi** will transform the museum’s foyer into a 20-meter-long mirror installation. The artwork creates a new meeting space where visitors are invited to perform. Maria Hassabi, along with dancer **Elena Antoniou**, will perform at the opening on Saturday, March 22. Afterwards, the choreography will be performed by rotating professional dancers every other Saturday afternoon in the installation at MAPS’ foyer.

STREETS AND CARS AS A RECURRING MOTIF

The exhibition borrows its title from the Motown hit *Dancing in the Streets*, which emerged in 1960s Detroit – the center of the automobile industry and an epicenter of the civil rights movement. The song became an anthem of peaceful resistance, an invitation to fill the streets with life and action. That same energy and attitude can be found in the artists featured in MAPS’ exhibition.

Streets and cars form a recurring motif throughout the exhibition, linking the individual to a broader social context: from **Allan Kaprow’s** happenings *Calling* and **Wolf Vostell’s** concrete car sculptures *Concrete Traffic* to **Lawrence Lek’s** AI work *NOX*, about self-driving cars in existential imbalance, and **Göksu Kunak’s** *VENUS*, a Mercedes-performance about the perpetual movement of immigrant culture.

In connection with the exhibition, MAPS has invited *New Genre Public Art* pioneer **Suzanne Lacy** to create a new car installation. The piece builds on her longstanding engagement with the role of art in social movements, including her project *Auto on the Edge of Time*, which focuses on violence against women.

PROGRAM | PUBLIC SPACES

During the opening weekend, March 22 and 23, 2025, *Dancing in the Streets (On Power)* extends into public spaces with an artistic takeover of iconic screens in Copenhagen and Odense:

- On the twin screens at Copenhagen City Hall Square, American artist **Jenny Holzer** will present a new animation work created specifically for the exhibition.
- On the screens above Nørreport Station and Odense's distinctive four-sided advertising column, Chilean artist **Alfredo Jaar** will disrupt the commercial flow with an artistic intervention.

Both interventions reference iconic public art events: Jenny Holzer's *Message to the Public*, displayed in the 1980s on Times Square, where her phrase *Abuse of Power Comes as No Surprise* was seen by millions. And Alfredo Jaar's *Tonight No Poetry Will Serve*, commissioned by CIRCA, shown on London's Piccadilly Lights in 2023 as a poetic commentary on the war in Gaza and the powerlessness of words in a violent era.

On Sunday, March 23, at sunset, artist Göksu Kunak's *VENUS 2.0* can be experienced at Copenhagen City Hall Square – a work originally commissioned by Neue National Galerie in Berlin, now reimaged for Copenhagen's urban space.

Throughout the exhibition period, *Dancing in the Streets (On Power)* will continue to present new works and revive historical masterpieces with reenactments of legendary public performances. In connection with the exhibition, the museum will expand with an outdoor LED screen on MAPS' facade, showcasing video works by, among others, **Guerilla Girls**, **Yoko Ono**, **Erik van Lieshout**, and **Pussy Riot**.



VENUS by Göksu Kunak with Felix Beer, Bugra Büyüksimsek, Markus Hausmann, Nomi Sladko originally commissioned by Neue Nationalgalerie Berlin Germany. Photo by: Jiri Abendt.

Additional information

Dancing in the Streets (On Power) presents projects from more than 70 artists:

3Nós3 (Hudnilson Jr., Mario Ramiro, og Rafael França), Alex Mlynarcik & Stano Filko, Alfredo Jaar, Allan Kaprow, Anna Halprin, Aki Sasamoto, Anicka Yi, Barbara Kruger, Basquiat, Big Tail Elephant (Liang Juhui, Lin Yi Lin, Chen Shaoxiong Xu Tan), Bjørn Nørgaard & Lene Adler Petersen, Oscar Rabin, Youri Jarkikh, Alexander Gleser, Concept 21 (Jian Jun Xi, Sheng Qi, Zheng Yu Ke), Peggy Diggs, Curtis Cuffie, Danh Vo, Daniel Buren, Daniel Felstead with Jenn Leung, DIS, Erik van Lieshout, Ewa Partum, Franco Mazzucchelli, General Idea, Gordon Matta-Clark, Graciela Carnevale, Guerrilla Girls, Günter Brus, Göksu Kunak, Heather & Ivan Morison, Heidi Bucher, Hélio Oiticica, Hi-Red Center (Genpei Akasegawa, Natsuyuki Nakanishi and Jiro Takamatsu), Ibrahim Mahama, Jenny Holzer, Jeremy Deller, Kader Attia, Kang Kuk-jin, Chong Ch'an-sung & Jung Kangja, Kara Walker, Lawrence Lek, Maria Hassabi, Marta Minujín, Michael Rakowitz, Mierele Laderman Ukeles, Nadya Tolokonnikova, Pascale Marthine Tayou, Pope.L, Public Movement, Pussy Riot, Rachel Whiteread, Richard Serra, Rosemary Mayer, Sanja Ivekovic, Suzanne Lacy, The Neo-Dada Organizers (Masunobu Yoshimura, Kinpei Masuzawa, Ushio Shinohara e.o.), Theaster Gates, Thomas Hirschhorn, Trisha Brown, Ushio Shinohara, Vito Acconci, Wolf Vostell, Yoko Ono, og Yvonne Rainer.

ABOUT MAPS

MAPS - Museum of Art in Public Spaces is Denmark's only museum dedicated exclusively to art in public spaces. MAPS engages local, national, and international audiences through exhibitions, commissions, research, educational activities, and public programs. From 2025, MAPS will intensify its production of temporary and long-term public art projects, engaging with national and regional urban spaces, landscapes, media, and digital public spaces. Simultaneously, the museum will reshape its exhibition activities, anchoring a flagship exhibition, **The Story of Public Art**, in the museum building alongside a series of smaller special exhibitions, creating an organic interplay between the museum's physical space and its core objective: art in public spaces. MAPS - Museum of Art in Public Spaces is formerly known as KØS Museum of Art in Public Spaces.

CURATOR

The exhibition is research-based and curated by Senior Curator at MAPS, **Charlotte Sprogøe**, PhD. In her research, Charlotte Sprogøe has explored exhibitions as living forms and contemporary art's use of location and choreography. Over the years, she has curated major contemporary art exhibitions for triennials, art centers, and museums, including Museum Brandts, Kunsthall Aarhus, Kunsthall Charlottenborg, and Rønnebæksholm.

EXHIBITION DESIGN

The exhibition is designed by the Milan-based, internationally recognized design firm **FormaFantasma**, which has previously designed the main exhibition **Milk of Dreams** at the Venice Biennale 2023 and received numerous international design awards.

Concept og Design: **Andrea Trimarchi, Simone Farresin**
 Design Development: **Gabriele Milanese**
 Visual identity and Graphic Design: **Alexis Mark**

A combined reader and catalog will accompany the exhibition and will be published in October 2025 with contributions from the exhibition's curator and a number of significant international theorists within art in public spaces.

The Story of Public Art is generously supported by New Carlsberg Foundation, The Augustinus Foundation, The A.P. Moller and Chastine Mc-Kinney Moller Foundation, The Obel Family Foundation, Beckett-Fonden, 15. Juni Fonden, and The Danish Arts Foundation. The exhibition is sponsored by Besana, Expromo, Værksted for fotografi.

The opening in Copenhagen on the evening of March 22 is presented in collaboration with Arch. Hotel partner is ProfilHotels Copenhagen Plaza, part of the Ligula Hospitality Group.

MAPS

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Tuesday–Sunday: 11am–5pm
Monday: Closed