PRESS RELEASE

THE ESSENCE OF COLOUR – THE ART OF QUEEN MARGRETHE II of Denmark

On 28th January 2012 ARKEN opens the doors to the exhibition THE ESSENCE OF COLOUR – The Art of Queen Margrethe II. This is the biggest exhibition hitherto of the Queen’s art, where the public can follow her artistic development over the past 35 years. Over 130 acrylic paintings, water-colours and découpages are presented – including a series of brand new works that have never before been shown to the public.

“The exhibition offers unique insight into the artist Margrethe II. We meet an open, vulnerable, searching human being who is able to convert her reflections on the fundamental existential conditions of human life into simple, lucid art,” says the director of ARKEN, Christian Gether, of THE ESSENCE OF COLOUR.

Colour first and foremost

In 1969 the Queen read Tolkien’s epic fantasy, which inspired among other things the series of water-colours Landscapes for Lost Legends. Since then, nature has been a central theme in the Queen’s art. “It is not only charming, it is also vast and frightening – and most fascinating of all when it is vast and frightening,” explains the Queen in conversation with Christian Gether about her sombre, depopulated landscapes. This is a mythical universe where the intensity, depth and atmosphere of the subject are created by colours. At the same time the tones in the Queen’s water-colours and paintings express emotions beyond the reach of words. The Queen herself says to Christian Gether: “For me it is always the colour, first and foremost”.

Humour as an artistic ploy

The Queen’s works reflect a special relationship with history and the present. This is most clearly seen in the découpages; incredible compositions of cuttings from art periodicals and art sale catalogues, teeming with references to the history of style and architectural details that create a setting for a burlesque sense of humour. The découpages have been used among other ways as scenery in the filming of The Snow Queen and The Wild Swans by Hans Christian Andersen, where they have evoked a fascinating, highly distinctive pictorial universe.

Traces of lived life

In her most recent works the Queen moves from the large landscapes to small natural fragments and ‘zooms in’ on individual elements such as rocks, carcases and bones. The bone series is brand new and has never been exhibited before. The urge to paint bones came irresistibly, just as the urge to paint stones and carcases was something inherent that simply had to come to expression through the brush. The bone pictures are not ‘true to life’ and the Queen describes them as “large, strange pictures of imaginary bones on a yellow ground.” There is something latently eerie about them, and reflections on mortality inevitably spring to mind. There are both humour and seriousness in these raw Vanitas symbols with forms so organic that you feel like reaching out and touching them.

As a viewer one can simply enjoy the insight into the artistic universe that the Queen has so generously chosen to share with the public.
Title: THE ESSENCE OF COLOUR – THE ART OF QUEEN MARGRETHE II

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The exhibition is supported by Nordea-fonden.

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