

THE STATUS OF THE POLITICAL IN CONTEMPORARY ART AND CULTURE

KLARTEXT!

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Statement

UKK, Young Art Workers, is an organization for younger artists and art workers in Denmark. The organization was formed in the summer of 2002, as an outcome of the protests against the newly elected ultra right wing government and its policies. Since gaining power in the November 2001 elections, the right wing government has targeted contemporary art among other areas in the Danish society such as environmental protection, education, immigration and human rights with economic cut backs and political restrictions. The cut backs directed at the arts sector particularly hit young and experimental art, as well as international exchanges and efforts. One of the reasons this was possible, even relatively easy, was due to the fact that no other organizations spoke on the behalf of those working in this field. As such, UKK was also formed in opposition to the existing artists associations and the royal artists guild and their conservative, elitist policies and agendas.

UKK thus have a dual aim; at once directed outward towards the political field and the media, and inwards towards the organization and structure of the art world and its institutions. UKK aims for a more dynamic and open field for contemporary art, and is the only organization to include two groups of art workers, artists as well as critics/curators in an effort to bridge the traditional gap between practice and theory, between production and mediation. The organization focuses on the rights and working conditions of contemporary, younger art workers, with a delimitation of 15 years of professional life. As opposed to other organizations, membership in UKK shall be gained through purely nominal rather than aesthetic grounds: anyone working professionally within contemporary art shall be accepted in order to represent the field in its broadest, rather than narrowest, elitist sense. UKK also represents students at academies and universities.

The organization will work towards the following goals:

- A more open and transparent structure in the Danish art system.
- The development of an art system that include experimental art, new media and international exchange.
- A broader and more enhanced debate on contemporary art and its placement, both on the art scene and in the general public sphere.
- More exhibitions of contemporary and experimental art in museums and public institutions.
- Equality between men and women in positions at institutions, as well as in collections and exhibitions in the institutions.
- Representation of UKK in public and ministerial committees and councils that pertains to contemporary art.
- The establishment of an Institute for Contemporary Art in Denmark, with equal focus on and funding for research, production and exhibition.
- The establishment of fixed rates and minimum wages for artists exhibiting at institutions and for freelance curators working for institutions.
- A larger and fairer representation of contemporary art in mass media.
- The establishment of an unemployment fund and rate for artists. Lodge, London, June 2004