

Foreword

Christian Gether

To be perfectly honest, when we stood with Palle Nielsen on February 7 2014, enjoying the sight of all the children who with queals of delight, flushed cheeks and eager paintbrushes conquered *The Model* in ARKEN's Art Axis, we were as nervous as we were happy. We were not entirely sure what we had started. We knew that we had given half of the museum's exhibition area to children for almost a year, so they could experience free play and a new interpretation of the legendary *The Model* of 1968. But we had not dared to hope that the children would embrace *The Model* so wholeheartedly, bringing it to life and transforming it from a playground into an artwork, from an exhibition into a place.

At ARKEN we have a strong focus on participation, people at play, and the role of the museum in society. *The Model* therefore has a special place in our hearts. It is the first time since 1968, after spending decades in oblivion and only recently being brought back into the limelight, that *The Model* has been installed in an art museum. With this publication, we aim to document *The Model* of 2014 and present art historical as well as educational and philosophical perspectives on Palle Nielsen's work. Many of the texts in the publication are extended versions of the presentations given at the seminar *Lisa was Here* at ARKEN in October 2014. We would like to extend our warm thanks to all the speakers and catalogue authors who have contributed from different perspectives with meaningful analyses of *The Model* as installation art, as a framework for play and creativity, and as a model for participation.

Project employee Thorbjørn Bechmann, coordinator Nanna Mølbak Hansen and ARKEN's curator Dorthe Juul Rugaard have made a major and dedicated contribution to the success of *The Model*. The same is true of our amazing team of play hosts – providing inspiration and friendly care – who from the first to the last day of the exhibition have provided an indispensable link between the children and the physical framework of *The Model*. Hosting a work like *The Model* demands considerable resources, and we would like to extend special thanks to Nordea-fonden. Without the generous support of the foundation, the project would never have been possible. We would also like to thank our collaborators Kvadrat and Maskot, who have helped us make daily life in *The Model* a good experience for children and adults alike.

Our greatest and warmest thanks, however, go to Palle Nielsen. For his passionate dedication to the wellbeing of children, for an outstanding collaboration, and for trusting us to get it right. It has been a fantastic experience for our visitors and for ARKEN. The 2014 exhibition of *The Model* is now closed, but we recently acquired the work for our collection. With the acquisition, we proudly and respectfully assume responsibility for keeping *The Model* alive for the children of the future.

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