

Biography

Mille Højerslev Nielsen

Palle Nielsen, born in Copenhagen in 1942.

1942-61 – Grows up in a working-class area of Amager, Copenhagen. His mother works at a cigarette factory, and his father as a welder at the Burmeister & Wain shipyard.

1961-63 – Graduates from Falkonergården High School in Frederiksberg, after which he travels around Europe before studying drawing and painting in Copenhagen in preparation for his application to The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts.

1963 – Accepted at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts' School of Painting, studying under the artists Egill Jacobsen and Richard Mortensen.

1965 – Has his debut as an artist at the juried Artist's Autumn Exhibition at Den Frie Exhibition Building with the painting trilogy *En historie om de små tings inderlige væsen* ('A History of the Intense Life of Small Things'). One of the works is purchased for the collection of The Danish Arts Foundation.

1965-67 – Transfers to The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts' School of Walls and Space under the artist Dan Steerup, from which he graduates in 1967.

1966 – Commissioned to decorate Danske Bank’s canteen and wins Amager Bank’s competition to decorate a street hoarding on Amagerbrogade, a competition run by the academy’s School of Walls and Space.

1966-67 – Employed as artistic advisor by Gladsaxe Council.

1967 – Art commissions including The Music Library in Gladsaxe and playgrounds in Gladsaxe Municipality.

1968 – Artistically and politically active in creating better conditions for children. Makes an illegal playground in a backyard of Nørrebro, Copenhagen in collaboration with architecture and university students and local residents.

Invited by the Swedish activist group Action Dialogue to help with the construction of playgrounds in Stockholm. Together they contact Pontus Hultén, director of Moderna Museet in Stockholm at the time, and make a contract to install an indoor playground as an exhibition in the main gallery of the museum.

On the basis of his playground projects, Palle Nielsen is awarded a Master’s grant at The Institute of Architecture, Urbanism and Landscape at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts’ School of Architecture. The grant forms the basis of funding applications for *The Model*, which is also part of the subsequent research project.

The installation and indoor playground *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society* is installed at Moderna Museet. Instead of using his own name, Palle Nielsen chooses the signature ‘The Working Group’. During the three-week exhibition more than 33,000 people visit *The Model*, which gets massive media coverage.

1968-69 – In the wake of *The Model*, Palle Nielsen installs the indoor playground *The Balloon* on a housing estate in Vesterås, Sweden. *The Balloon* is built using materials from *The Model*.

Publishes a series of texts relating to *The Model* and *The Balloon*. These texts mark the first steps towards Nielsen's definition of the concept of 'social aesthetics'.

1969 – Starts the research project 'Children's Play in Urban Housing Areas' at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts' School of Architecture.

Constructs an activity playground on a housing estate in Høje Gladsaxe, Denmark in collaboration with local residents and a group of architecture students as part of the research project at The School of Architecture. Local residents are interviewed by Palle Nielsen and a group of sociology and psychology students prior to the construction of the playground.

Follows courses at The Department of Education, University of Copenhagen.

1969-71 – Public commission to make a mural for the lobby of The Institute for the Blind in Hellerup with the support of The Danish Arts Foundation.

1969-73 – Participates in the jubilee exhibition *Festival 200* at Charlottenborg.

1971-75 – Starts his own architecture studio specialising in playground design and construction. Parallel to this, he is also employed as a landscape and housing advisor by Copenhagen City's architect and various local Danish councils.

1973-75 – Public commission for a mural in the lobby of Hvidovre Hospital, Copenhagen.

1979 – Public commission for a mural at Copenhagen Business School.

1981-98 – Hired by various unemployment agencies in and

around Copenhagen as a supervisor and teacher in industrial relations, adult education and collaboration, and later as the project supervisor for public art commissions as well as design and drawing teaching programmes.

1986 – Public commission for a mural at Nordvang Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Unit, Glostrup.

1989 – Public commission for a mural of pictograms and banisters for the residential wing of The Blind Institute in Hellerup.

1994 – Public commission for a wall sculpture at Lysholm School for children with special needs in Roskilde.

1999-2001 – Contacted by the art historian Lars Bang Larsen about his Master's thesis on *The Model*. The meeting marks the beginning of a theoretical and project-based collaboration on the work of Palle Nielsen and the concept of 'social aesthetics'.

2000-14 – A slideshow of 160 photographs documenting *The Model* (1968) is exhibited in art museums around the world.

2000-01 – Participates in the international touring group exhibition *Pyramids of Mars*, which is shown at The Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh, The Barbican Centre in London and at Trapholt Museum in Kolding, where the interactive play sculpture *Anthill* is also installed.

2005 – Participates in the international group exhibition *The Invisible Insurrection of a Million Minds* at Sala Rekalde in Bilbao.

2008 – Participates in the international group exhibition *The Great Game to Come* at Frankfurter Kunstverein, and leads a workshop for students at Städelschule Art Institute in Frankfurt and The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, where the professor and artist Nils Norman also participates as a teacher.

2009 – Installs a smaller version of *The Model* with the title *The Children's Peace Corner* during the art event Kunst Kaap Fort (KAAP) at Fort Ruigenhoek in Utrecht.

Participates in the international group exhibition *Time as Matter* at The Museu d'Art de Barcelona (MACBA). Nielsen donates 160 photographs, a collection of sound recordings and the records that were played in *The Model* in 1968 to MACBA in return for their publication of a book on *The Model*.

2010 – The book Palle Nielsen: *The Model – A Model for a Qualitative Society*, which includes photographs from *The Model*, an essay by Lars Bang Larsen and Palle Nielsen's original texts from 1968-1969 is published by MACBA.

Participates in the 29th São Paulo Biennale in Brazil with photographic documentation of *The Model*.

2012 – Participates in the group exhibition *Century of the Child* at MoMA in New York. The exhibition is also shown at Vandalorum Museum of Art and Design in Värnamo, Sweden in 2014, and will be shown at Designmuseum Danmark in Copenhagen in 2015 and Designmuseo in Helsinki in 2015-2016.

2013 – The installation *The Model* is reconstructed outdoors at Place de la Bataille de Stalingrad, Paris, in a version curtailed by EU playground safety regulations. The reconstruction of *The Model* is part of the international group exhibition *Nuit Blanche*, a one-night event in different parts of the city and at Parisian art institutions. The exhibition of *The Model*, however, lasts a week.

2013-14 – The special exhibition *Palle Nielsen: The Model* is shown at Tate Liverpool as part of the international group exhibition *Art Turning Left: How Values Changed Making 1789-2013*. The exhibition presents the documentation of *The Model* in its entirety.

2014 – *The Model* is rebuilt at ARKEN in a new version adapted to the museum's galleries.

Participates in the international group exhibition *Playgrounds: Reinventing the Square* at Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in Madrid.

A selection of Palle Nielsen's own texts from 1968-69 are published in *Exhibition – Documents of Contemporary Art*, White-chapel Publications.

The Model (1968/2014) becomes part of ARKEN's permanent collection.

Mille Højerslev Nielsen
holds an MA in Visual Culture.