eye4 arts

JEPPE HEIN Don't Look At Me

Jeppe Hein's works will be on display at PICA from Friday, February 12, 'til Monday, April 5. For more info, head to perthfestival.com.au.

Critically acclaimed Danish conceptual artist Jeppe Hein will present his first ever Australian solo exhibition at PICA as part of this year's *Perth International Arts Festival*. Hein is famous worldwide for his large scale installations such as his bendy oversized park benches, disintegrating rooms and jets of smoke and fire which challenge, often humorously, the way people interact with art in public spaces. A selection of Hein's works will be exhibited inside and outside PICA, including his famous water jet installation *Appearing Rooms*, which should provide a refreshing cool-off for art lovers this summer.

By DAVID CRADDOCK

You've said in the past that you enjoy observing people interacting with your works. Does this observation influence how you create and build new works?
Sometimes. My *Modified Social Benches* for example are very popular amongst skaters. I like it when the benches are used in this way and I kept it in mind when I worked on a commission work project that included a long bench. Taking into consideration what would be a perfect underground or bending for skating on the bench, I chose its shape and material.

Passers by may not know that your large outdoor pieces are created by you. Does this appeal to you, the anonymity that comes with presenting such works?
It is not important for me that people know it's my work. It is more important that passers-by stop, take a closer look and interact with the object, surrounding and others.

Your use of mirrors in *Spiral Labyrinth* flips the traditional viewer / artwork relationship, in that it makes the viewer interact with the artwork. Why are you interested in challenging this relationship?
Instead of passive perception and theoretical reflection, the visitor's direct and physical experiences are important to me. Interaction is a distinctive element of my artworks that is intended to establish a dialogue between work and the viewer as well as between other visitors thus supporting the social aspect of art.

The show at PICA will be your first solo exhibition in Australia. Do you notice that people in different countries respond to your work in different ways?
Probably based on the cultural diversity, I recognised that there is a slight difference in how Asian people respond to my artworks, especially when they demand a high degree of interpersonal participation. But in most cases their awe turns very fast to joy like in other countries. Ideally art brings together people from different contexts and origins giving them an opportunity for exchange.

People have said there is a humorous 'candid camera' aspect to your works. Is this deliberate? In works like *Did I Miss Something* (2002) [a work which involves the viewer sitting on a park bench and triggering a fountain of water in a lake] did you deliberately aim for humour?
Art can be very appealing for people, creating joyful and playful situations as well as relaxing moments and opportunities for interaction with other people and making them laugh. Life is easier with a smile on your face, or as Charlie Chaplin said: a day without laughter is a day wasted. So if an artwork can put a smile on someone's face and get him in high spirits, it might also make life better momentarily.
Though I like it when my works amuses people, my main intention is not to entertain people and my work are based on serious principles. Playfulness and participation make it easier for people – especially for those who normally are not in touch with art – to approach artworks.

X-Press Magazine
11/02/2010
Page: 34
Section: General News
Region: National Circulation: 40000
Type: Australian Magazines Lifestyle
Size: 320.00 sq.cms
Frequency: ---T---

Page 2 of 2

Appearing Rooms