

MORE!

Kim Richard
Adler Meidahl

ONLINE



OFFLINE

10 June –
6 August 2023



RØNNEBÆKSHOLM

ONE! MORE! TIME!

Kim Richard Adler Mejdahl

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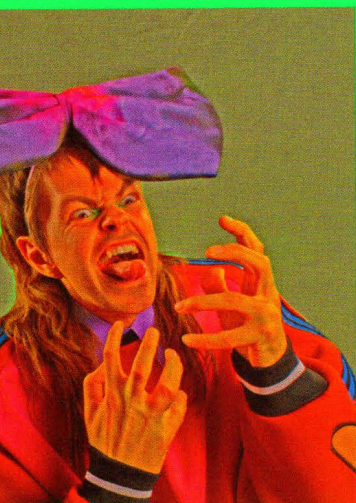
Seagull Poo, Big Boobs, Nappies, Earwax and Rotten Fish, for Danes some of these names will remind them of the 90s, and kicked off the opening of BonBon-Land in 1992. Taking the artist's personal relationship to BonBon-Land as a starting point, the exhibition delves into Danish working-class culture's relationship to medieval monsters and Egyptian mythology. BonBon-Land's bizarre mascots can now be experienced indoors and outdoors at Rønnebæksholm, as we jump on board Mejdahl's artistic roller coaster ride – a moment in which we are lifted from our seats, feeling weightless and free.

In the installed BonBon figures and newly produced works, Mejdahl mutates the mental space and childhood memories of BonBon-Land in a grotesque way. He utilises the potential of art to console all our painful memories from the past. The retrospective gaze on childhood rapture encompasses a nostalgia, a word which comes from the Greek *nostos*, meaning homecoming, and *algos*, meaning pain. This duality, in which the personal also encompasses the painful, is anchored in Mejdahl's practice. He explores dormant memories and repressed traumas, in order to find a clear sense of something one doesn't yet entirely understand. In One! More! Time! we are let into Mejdahl's world, where the joyful and the painful go hand in hand.



Temptation of Saint Anthony.

Mejdahl plays with aesthetic norms and a neutral view of art. In his land of play, the categories of high and low culture have changed places, and the BonBon devices of his new works challenge and dislodge the ideals of beauty. His loving look at BonBon-Land's mascots corresponds to the child's non-judgemental gaze, which has yet to be influenced by preconceptions or preferences of taste. According to the artist, this is a liberated view of art which makes it possible to see what is hidden behind the exteriors of the BonBon beings. As an artist, Mejdahl can today see how his childhood trips to



the amusement park have fixed themselves as a mental space and visual inspiration. The Gothic art space has now been transformed into an amusement park. In the gardens the poet's pavilion *Venligheden* (Friendliness) has been peopled with large old figures, and Mejdahl's expanded BonBon universe has been installed inside the exhibition space, with new sweets mixed with his grotesque humour, animated films, deconstructed merchandise, and a drawing of an altar with myriad small BonBon monsters.

Contradictions seep out of all the works: the bright and the bleak, the funny and the serious, the vulgar and the refined, the beautiful and the ugly. Mejdahl also points out, however, that nothing is black and white, but must contain both sides or even highlight the shady side. A general thematic play in the exhibition is day and night, light and dark. In the new video work *Sinrise*, Mejdahl has been to BonBon-Land 'after dark', to see what the creatures get up to when BonBon-Land closes. As hilariously funny as BonBon-Land is during the day, after closing time it perhaps becomes more like Mejdahl's grotesque world of petrified amusements, where the characters show their shady sides.

One of the main pieces, which unfolds this shadow work, is the altar drawing *Blesssin*. It refers to Hieronymus Bosch (c. 1450-1516) and his use of his own time's grotesques found in religious documents, and is a reinterpretation of BonBon-Land's mascots. Like Bosch's paintings, Mejdahl's *Blesssin* has a sinking feeling, and the monsters tumble about. Even though the Middle Ages have long since passed, one senses clear inspiration from its visual language and imagination, with its penchant for mysticism, visions and religious ecstasy.

Bosch does not belong only to the Middle Ages; in the form of an undercurrent, he finds his way to our own century, and has been called 'The Grandfather of Surrealism' since most of his paintings in many ways prefigure the dream and nightmare-like visions of surrealism – as can be seen in the works of artists like Salvador Dali, Giorgio de Chirico, Leonora Carrington, Julie Nord, and now Kim Richard Adler Mejdahl. Mejdahl has one foot strangely placed in Bosch's artistic universe and surrealism's unusual, suspenseful juxtaposition of recognisable objects. Through his strange, effervescent and fabulating artistic expression, Mejdahl manages to gather all the threads as one long red thread through the exhibition.

Kim Richard Adler Mejdahl has with *One! More! Time!* created an incredibly personal story in which one can step into his dream universe with a watchful eye. Come, step through the mental portal, from day to night and back again.

Vibeke Kelding Hansen, Curator, Rønnebæksholm



Hieronymus Bosch, 1502 (detail)

① *Rat Palace* (2023)

NFS Grundtvig's poet's pavilion has been taken over by the colourful mascots of BonBon-Land. Previously they adorned the amusements in BonBon-Land, but have now occupied the Gothic exhibition space's garden. In the meeting between the cultural historical ancestors of Rønnebæksholm and BonBon-Land's unrestrained humour, Mejdahl creates an installation which seeks to turn our ideas about high and low culture upside down.

② *Kim von BonBon* (2023)

A sweet-chewing lizard from BonBon-Land's old carousel welcomes you to the exhibition. Through his sweet alter ego Kim von BonBon, Mejdahl sets the tone of the exhibition with a nostalgic fantasy game. The fictional bags of sweets refer to BonBon-Land's old ones as a part of Danish cultural history that in a humorous way celebrated provincial Denmark and its (arche)types of the worker, now with a focus on the shamelessness and queerness of the figures.

③ *Kim von BonBon* (2023)

Mejdahl celebrates the original, over the top BonBon bags of sweets, but would his new products get past the marketing department today? *Fondant Ticks*, *Scara-CRAP*, and *Killer Slugs* seem like forgotten moments of childhood, while *Wank Rags*, *Puke Mix*, and *Dingleberries*, cheerfully dance across the boundary of vulgarity. In *Thongtoad*, a wart-infested frog, dressed in a naughty little G-string, peeks out from the dust of the Middle Ages, where Bosch consistently used the frog as an ominous symbol of sin. Kim von BonBon's new bags of sweets celebrate the grotesqueness of the BonBon universe, and at the same time ask whether a queer potential was hidden in the originals.

④ *New Merch* (2023)

From the gigantic nostalgia trip of the assortment of sweets, Frankensteined sweatshirts lead you further into Mejdahl's dream. Here clothes hang in different sizes and make up a ghostlike family. A wild boar with the wings of a seagull and bared breasts marks the crossing from the exhibition's waking side to the dark, dormant part.

⑤ *Millennium March* (2023)

In the merciless flashing of a stroboscopic light stands a baby rabbit, opening the exhibition's shadow world. Used BonBon signs hang on the walls and form a march into the darkness, but they don't seem to be entirely in agreement about which direction one should walk in.

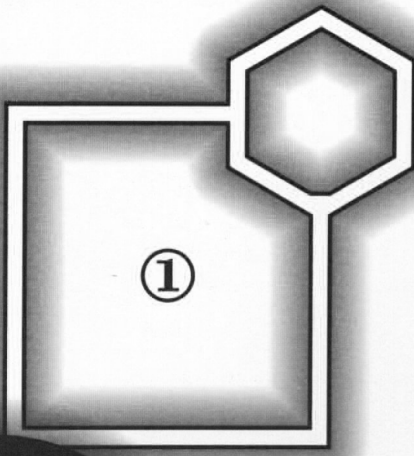
⑥ *Blessin* (2023)

Pencil and ink. 280×152 cm

In this triptych drawing, Mejdahl offers his version of a garden of paradise. Outside this bizarre earthly paradise a child is on its way through the gateway to a wild party, where darkness lurks. Mejdahl has rewritten the 'Fall' and created a world full of beings that seem, in peace and friendship, to have united with their inherent sins. The child travels through the garden like a pilgrim, and finally flies away on the wings of an androgynous wild boar-angel.

A holy scarab rolls its shining ball of excrement across the sky. With a snap of the fingers Mejdahl unites ancient Egyptian symbols with BonBon-Land's well-known faecal humour. The scarab, 'skarabæ' in Danish, is the archetypical symbol of death, rebirth and the cosmic cycle, and has at the same time a name that ends in 'bæ', a rude word for faeces.

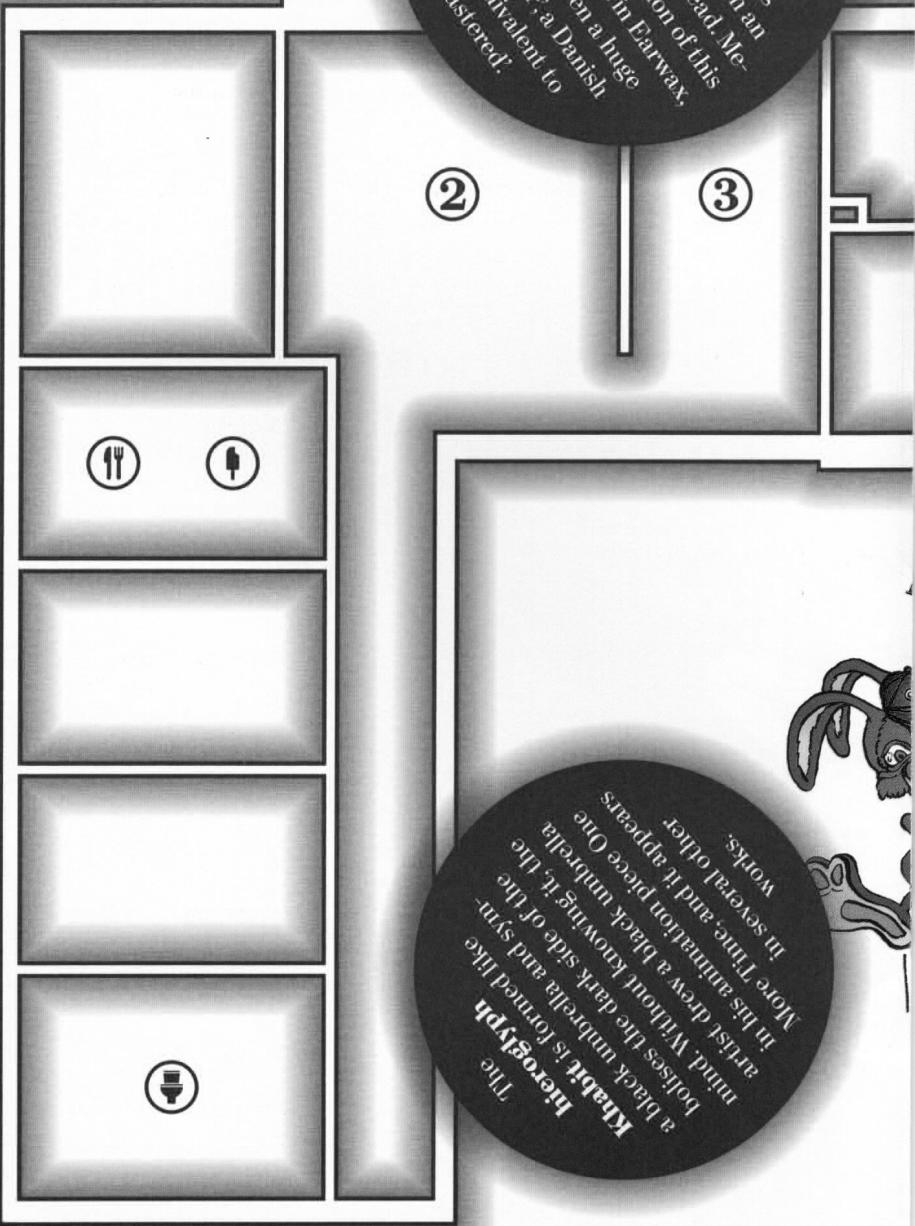
Blessin is a direct reference to Bosch's triptych *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. Mejdahl's *Blessin* can be closed and on the front are old BonBon stickers in a cycle around a large, green sun.



A grotesque is a medieval designation for crazy combinations of animals and humans or mythological beings. Grotesques were used to depict people's sins in religious documents. They were considered lower-brow art form, but on the other hand fun and used to satirise medieval themes.

Sinrise The title of 'sinrise' is a rewriting of 'sunrise'. The artist typed the word by mistake when he was searching online about...

Synchronized drinking game Bosch illustrated the contemporary idiom for 'getting tanked up' by giving a demon an upside-down funnel on its head. Mejdahl has found a reflection of this in BonBon-Laud's Erwin Earwax, who has been given a huge 'rod in the ear', a Danish idiom equivalent to 'plastered'.



hieroglyph The **Klabrt** is formed like a black umbrella and symbolises the dark side of the mind. Without knowing it, the artist drew a black umbrella in his animation piece One More Time, and it appears in several other works.

⑦ *Sinrise* (2023)
Video. Length: 3 mins

Mejdahl has stayed alone in BonBon-Land from sunset to sunrise and explored what happens when darkness descends, and whether the park's animals awoken to the act of darkness. In the black interval we go on a cosmic roller coaster ride among the stars.

⑧ *Fanfare* (2023)
Animation. Length: 2 mins

In a shadowy cemetery landscape we follow the march of an orchestra, but where are they going, and who are they to play music for? In the hills the artist has reproduced the Kanehøj Mill in Skælskør his hometown. The mill lies a stone's throw away from a burial mound, which later became the gallows hill where the last execution in Denmark took place, 198 years ago.

The sombre tone of the motif is further enforced by an instrument of torture appearing on the horizon: a so-called breaking wheel, which was a recurring symbol in Bosch's works. The broken body was left on the wheel to be devoured by cadaver-eating birds. The circular form or the sphere appears in the exhibition's other works as a life-giving symbol. In *Fanfare* we meet the symbol's shadow side, the shining sun has become the executioner's wheel.

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Queer is an umbrella term which can encompass all persons within the LGBTQIA movement who are not cisgender or heterosexual. There are many different and individual meanings of the concept. Queer can be an approach to gender and sexuality, or raise questions about gender roles.

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⑨ *One more time* (2023)
Animation. Length: 1 min

"One more time", shouts the little girl in the original TV advert for BonBon-Land from 1992. In Mejdahl's interpretation, hectic as Indiana Jones, we go on a roller coaster ride on which the girl brings all the park's figures to life by stealing a magical scarab. According to the artist, the work is a tribute to the inner broken child. Perhaps the child who simply wants to have another go on the roller coaster, until she throws up, becomes the image of the adult's painful, vain attempt to regain childhood's promised state of rapture. The work was made by hand and consists of a thousand ink drawings.

⑩ *Monument (a dream)* (2023)
Photograph and letter. 133×100 cm

Mejdahl shares his dream of turning a derelict lookout tower in BonBon-Land into a permanent monument. As though taken from a Boschian vision, Mejdahl looks at us from the gigantic seagull's hollow cranium. As a child, the artist used to stand here with his family and look out across this paradise. At the wish of the artist, the old seagull has been packed in metallic foil, which transforms the tower into a precious stone of the same green colour as the Danish scarab, green rose chafer.

The green rose chafer is a Danish scarab which lives in Zealand, known for its metallic green colour. The scarab bears ancient symbolism for death and rebirth, and has been used as a holy amulet. Egyptian mummies had the insect placed over the heart, so that the soul would remain calm and journey safely into the afterlife.

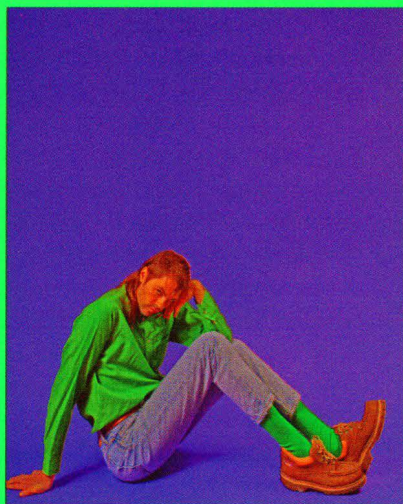


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Kim Richard Adler Mejdahl lives and works in Copenhagen. He is educated from Funen Art Academy and graduated from The Royal Danish Academy of Art in 2019.

Mejdahl has exhibited at Kunsthal Charlottenborg, O—Overgaden, and internationally at film festivals in e.g. Germany, France, Norway, Iceland and South Korea.

In 2018 he received the Charlottenborg Spring Exhibition's Solo Prize, and in 2020 he was awarded a place in O—Overgaden's development program INTRO. In 2021 he received Elna & C.T. Hollesen grant. In 2022, he was awarded the Danish Arts Foundation's two-year career program *The Young Artistic Elite*.



Under the alias Kim Kim, Mejdahl has released several albums and, among other things, played at the Roskilde Festival in 2022. Mejdahl's work is represented in the National Gallery of Denmark's collection.

Guided tours on chosen Sundays, 3 PM (UK)

Sundays in July, 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd

Curated by Vibeke Kelding Hansen,
curator, Rønnebæksholm
Curatorial assistant, Asta Paludan

Graphic Design: Filip Grønning
Photos: Kim Richard Adler Mejdahl
Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga



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