

gl Holtegaard

Press Release, August 2019



Tal R, *Spotlight*, (2009), ©Tal R, Courtesy Galleri Bo Bjerggaard. Photo: Jochen Littkemann / PR Gl. Holtegaard

CIRCUS

Miriam Bäckström (SE), Flemming Bergsøe (DK), Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen (DK), Alexander Calder (US), Franciska Clausen (DK), Hans-Peter Feldmann (DE), Leo Gestel (NL), Harald Giersing (DK), Isaac Grünewald (SE), Preben Hornung (DK), Henri-Gabriel Ibels (FR), Henrik Plenge Jakobsen (DK), Pauline Curnier Jardin (FR), Svend Johansen (DK), Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (DE), Pyke Koch (NL), Michael Kvium (DK), Peter Land (DK), Vilhelm Lundstrøm (DK), Kees Maks (NL), Daria Martin (US), Paul McCarthy (US), Albert Mertz (DK), Jais Nielsen (DK), Robert Storm Petersen (DK), Hans Scherfig (DK), Superflex (DK), Tal R (DK), Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (FR), Viggo Rivad (DK), J.F. Willumsen (DK)

AUGUST 23rd 2019 – JANUARY 5th 2020

Exhibition opening: AUGUST 22nd 2019, 17.00-19.00

This autumn's exhibition at Gammel Holtegaard explores the central role of the circus in art history, from the period known as the modern breakthrough in Scandinavia to contemporary art today – from Toulouse-Lautrec to Tal R.

Welcome to the circus! Gammel Holtegaard's autumn exhibition invites you into the circus ring with works by historical and contemporary artists from Denmark and abroad. With walls covered in red and white stripes the big top has taken over the galleries at Gammel Holtegaard. The stage is set with dramatic spotlights focusing on the spellbinding ups and downs of circus life.

With *CIRCUS* Gammel Holtegaard sheds light on circus themes in art from the late 1800s to today. As a symbol of modernity and city life, the circus was a major source of inspiration for avant-garde artists in the early 20th century. Depictions of circus horses, clowns, acrobats and backstage life became popular subjects for experimenting with expressive form and imagery. In one astounding act after the other the circus turned the world upside down – just like the radical transformations wrought by industrialisation during the same period. Artists portrayed the absurdities and social deprivation of circus life, from neck-breaking performances in the ring to the insecurities of life on the road. Right up until today artists' depictions of the circus have been inspired by the absurd and grotesque, as well as virtually mythical tales of circus life.

Visitors encounter the first work in the exhibition in Gammel Holtegaard's ring-shaped forecourt – a 4.5 m high sculpture by Danish artist Henrik Plenge Jakobsen (b.1967) commissioned specifically for the exhibition. The work *Ye are many - they are few / Mary* (2019) takes the form of a scarecrow, a socially critical, punk take on the circus clown with a raised pitchfork. An entertainer, but also a revolutionary figure ready to lay into the bourgeoisie whose tastes are symbolised by the Baroque architecture and history of Gammel Holtegaard.

In *CIRCUS* old and new works are installed side by side, tracing circus themes throughout art history. Under the theme *Backstage*, for example, we see the grotesque spectacle of Pauline Curnier Jardin's (f. 1980) video work *Teetotum* (2017), where she uses a chilling B-movie aesthetic to depict the rigorous discipline of circus training killing child performers. The work is installed next to Storm P's (1862-1949) 1940 painting of a nervous green clown peeking out at the ring from the darkness of the wings. The juxtaposition of the works brings aspects of circus life not usually in the limelight to the fore, at the same time as charting the development of the genre in art history.

Performative Events Programme

Gammel Holtegaard has invited artists and other experts to relate to specific works in the exhibition. Michael Eigtved, Associate Professor in Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Copenhagen, will present a performance lecture that includes a live act by a new circus artiste, Teater Mungo Park visit Gammel Holtegaard with the experimental performance *Mungo Lab #35 – CIRKUS*, and cellist Josefine Opsahl will give a solo performance exploring the themes of the exhibition through music. The events programme also includes art talks, half-term workshops for children and adults, as well as Art & Garden Walks.

Read more about our events programme at www.glholtegaard.dk

Circus Catalogue

The exhibition is accompanied by a richly illustrated catalogue with articles guiding readers through the circus in culture, literature, film and art history by art historian, author and art critic Peter Michael Hornung, literary historian, author and cultural critic Bo Tao Michaëlis, as well as former director of Denmark's Circus Museum, Anja Olsen.

The catalogue, published in Danish, will be launched on the opening day of the exhibition

Exhibition opening

We are very happy to invite you to exhibition opening at Gammel Holtegaard on the show *CIRCUS*.

THURSDAY, AUG 22nd 2019, 5-7pm

PROGRAM

5pm

- Welcome by Maria Gadegaard, director of Gl. Holtegaard.
- Openingspeech by art historian, art critic and author Peter Michael Hornung and literary historian, culture critic and author Bo Tao Michaëlis.

Guests are invited to join us on the circular lawn in front of the main building for rosé and split pea soup.

Exhibition Period

The exhibition runs from August 23rd 2019 to January 5th 2020.

The exhibition is open Tuesday-Sunday from 12.00-17.00, Thursday from 12.00-20.00.

Closed Monday.

Press

For more information please do not hesitate to contact Communications Officer Nina Peitersen at ninp@rudersdal.dk or on +45 45 80 08 78.

Press materials can be downloaded [here](#)

The exhibition has been generously supported by:

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